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ABSTRACT

This theme issue focuses on literacy education and prereading activities for very young children who may be at risk for reading failure. It contains several papers, with the following titles and authors: "The Beginnings of Literacy" (Joan Brooks McLane and Gillian Dowley McNamee); "A Book Is a Child's Companion" (Jeree H. Pawl); "What's It Mean To Share a Story?" (Colleen E. Morisset); "Shared Reading in Daycare: Successes and Challenges" (Grover J. Whitehurst and Janet E. Fischel); "Reach Out and Read: A Pediatric Program To Support Emergent Literacy" (Kathleen Fitzgerald and Robert Needlman); "Stories for the Shelter: Introducing Books for Very Young Children to Parents and Staff" (Nancy Johns and others); "Parents as Teachers: Nurturing Literacy in the Very Young" (Mildred Winter and Joy M. Rouse); and "Family Literacy: Serving Undereducated Families" (Bonnie Lash Freeman). The issue concludes with notes about the National Center for Clinical Infant Programs and descriptions of recent publications. (JDD)

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The Beginnings of Literacy

by

Joan Brooks McLane and Gillian Dowley McNamee
Erikson Institute

(This article is based on Early Literacy, *McLane & McNamee Harvard University Press, 1990)*

Literacy often begins early, long before children encounter formal school instruction in writing and reading. Literacy itself is not easy to define, and there are many disputes and unresolved questions about how literacy develops. Central to many recent discussions of literacy is the notion that writing and reading are ways of making, interpreting, and communicating meaning. Reading is defined as the ability to "take meaning from print," (Heath, 1982) and writing as the ability to use print to communicate with others. According to these definitions, reading and writing are more than simply decoding and encoding print: they are ways of constructing and conveying meaning with written language. Becoming literate, then, is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves more than learning a set of technical skills (such as learning the alphabet, learning how to form letters and spell words, and learning how to decode print) that are typically taught in elementary school; becoming literate also includes mastering a complex set of understandings, attitudes, expectations and behaviors, as well as specific skills, related to written language (Erickson, 1984; Cook-Gumperz, 1986).

Many young children begin to learn about writing and reading well before they start elementary school. However, their early literacy activities may look quite different from more mature, conventional forms of writing and reading. For example, one weekend, Jennifer, who had just turned two, went with her father to visit her grandmother in the country. Her grandmother read her *Johnny Lion's Book* by Edith Thacher Hurd—a story book about a young lion who dreams of going hunting in the woods. About an hour later, Jennifer, who had been playing outside, called to her father, "I read a book,

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Daddy." She had picked two big leaves which she now held, one lying flat on the palm of each hand. She and her father sat down on the steps, side by side, and Jennifer started "reading" her "book" in what her grandmother described as a "dramatic voice," which sounded very much like reading: "And a big bear (pause) went into the woods and she chased a big lion (pause) and she caught a big lion." After another pause, her father said, "and then what did the bear do?" Jennifer answered, "Then the big bear went home to her mommy."

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Jennifer's pretend reading makes it clear that she is interested in reading and stories. She does not yet know how to read (or write) in a conventional sense, but she pretends to know. Playing with reading is one way she learns about written language and how it can be used. This incident also shows how familiar Jennifer already is with reading—two leaves can serve as her "text" and she can invent a simple but coherent story and tell it in a voice that accurately mimics a reading intonation. And it indicates that Jennifer finds reading interesting and pleasurable—as well as a good way to capture her father's attention.

There are many ways that children make connections with writing and reading, and many pathways into literacy.

Writing and reading can enter young children's lives in a variety of ways. Early experiences with literacy may be initiated by the child or by other people, they may be playful or work-like, and may take place at home, in the neighborhood, or in community settings such as preschools, daycare centers, and churches. Early literacy experiences can include pretending to write and read stories and poems, writing a thank-you letter to a distant grandmother, receiving instruction in how to form the letters of one's name, listening to a story being read aloud, or reading passages from the Bible. The range and diversity of early literacy experiences suggests that there are many ways that children make connections with writing and reading, and many pathways into literacy.

Bridges to literacy

Literacy development often starts in young children's early symbol using activities: in talking, in play and fantasy, in scribbling and drawing, in pretend reading and writing. Between the ages of 1-5 children learn to use symbols to create and communicate meaning—both symbols they invent for themselves and those "donated by the culture" (Gardner & Wolf, 1979, p.vii). The use of symbols—which may include words, gestures, marks on paper, objects modeled in clay, and so forth—makes it possible to represent experience, feelings and ideas. Symbols also allow children to go beyond the immediate here and now and to create imaginary worlds. This is what they do when they talk about storybook plots, when they make up stories, engage in pretend play, or draw images on paper—and later when they read books and write stories. As children begin to experiment with writing and reading, often in playful ways, they may find they can use these new symbolic modes in some of the same ways they used earlier developed symbolic forms—so that talking, drawing, and playing can serve as "bridges" to literacy, as children discover that writing and reading offer them new and interesting resources for constructing and communicating meaning (Gundlach, 1982; Dyson, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

Play: making connections with writing and reading

Play consumes much of young children's time and energy, and for many children, play is where writing and

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reading begin. Play is the arena in which young children make connections between their immediate personal world and activities that are important in the larger social world of family and community, and play is the context in which many children find ways to make culturally valued activities part of their own personal experience. When children play with writing and reading, they are actively trying to use—and to understand and make sense of—reading and writing long before they can actually read and write. When books, paper, and writing material are among the objects children play with, important literacy learnings can occur. As they experiment with written language, often in playful ways, children begin to learn what writing and reading are, and what they can do with them. At the same time, children can acquire a range of information and skills related to writing and reading, as well as feelings and expectations about themselves as potential readers and writers. This multifaceted body of knowledge and attitudes constitutes early or "emergent" literacy (Holdaway, 1979; Teale & Sulzby, 1986).

Play appears to have at least two potential links to the development of literacy: First, as a symbolic activity, pretend play allows children to develop and refine their capacities to use symbols, to represent experience, and to construct imaginary worlds, capacities they will draw on when they begin to write and read. Second, as an orientation or approach to experience, play can make the various roles and activities of people who read and write more meaningful and hence more accessible to young children.

When children create imaginary situations in pretend play, they invent and inhabit "alternative" or "possible worlds." This is similar to what they do when they listen to storybooks, and to what they do when they read or write stories themselves. Indeed, there are similarities between pretend play and storytelling, and in the kinds of competence the two require (Britton, 1983; Bruner, 1984; Galda, 1984). Many children make up their first stories in the context of pretend play, creating and enacting their own dramatic narratives (and reenacting favorite stories they have heard being read aloud). Indeed, one of the things that attracts young children to pretend play is the chance to tell stories. Later, many children are attracted to writing and reading for the same reasons: they find they can participate in stories told by others.

As children mature, their pretend play and the symbolic transformations they use to create and sustain it become increasingly elaborate, complex, and abstract. With development, pretend play becomes less dependent on physical props, gestures, and actions, and relies increasingly on ideas, imagination, and language. Children often employ abundant, rich language in pretend play. An increasing proportion of the time devoted to pretend play is spent in talk, as children discuss the setting, the characters or roles, and the plots they will enact in their play. Indeed at times it seems as though "the saying is the playing (Garvey Berndt, 1975, p.9)." As pretend play becomes increasingly dependent on language to create possible worlds and to express and communicate meanings, it comes closer to the experiences of storytelling, writing, and reading.

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Children seem to be able to play with almost anything: objects, movements, behaviors, roles, rules, and language. Many play with the implements and materials of written language: with paper, pencils, markers, crayons, and books, with the activities of writing and reading, and with the roles of writer and reader. Children incorporate both real and pretend writing and reading into their dramatic play, using them to enhance the drama and realism of the pretend situation. They may use characters and plots from their favorite storybooks. Some preschool children explore the tools and activities of literacy in playful ways, using pretend writing to create "stories," "poems," or "news bulletins"—as 4½ year-old Joshua did one Sunday afternoon: After dressing up in various costumes and pretending he was "a baby learning to fly," Joshua wrote some letters and letterlike figures on a piece of paper. He showed this to his mother and said "Now wait for the surprise." Then he held the paper in front of his face while he shouted: "Good evening ladies and gentlemen! This is the ABC News! Now we have lots of weather!"

Joshua's written news report and his reading of it contain elements of real literacy—letterlike shapes, and the understanding that these carry a message. In this sort of play children practice and integrate what they know or what they surmise about a range of activities and roles outside their immediate experience and understanding. As Greta Fein observed, "pretense [may] provide special opportunities for the partially understood and the dimly grasped to become more firmly mastered (1979, p.206)." By playing with writing and reading, children become familiar with the tools of literacy and begin to learn how to use and control them. Such play

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also allows children to acquire some global notions of what writing and reading consist of and what they can do with them.

In play the focus is on exploring rather than on accomplishing predetermined ends or goals, so there are few pressures to produce correct answers or final products. Play's nonliteral, not-for-real, "not-for-profit" orientation allows players the freedom to manipulate materials, experiences, roles, and ideas in new, creative, experimental, "as if" ways (Bruner, 1977, p.v; Garvey, 1974). Play thus creates a risk-free context in which children do not have to worry about "getting it right" or about "messing up." This freedom may lead children to discover or invent new possibilities—new ways of doing things and new ways of thinking about ideas—which may, in turn, lead them to new questions, problems, and solutions. Approaching writing and reading with such an experimental, "as if" attitude may help children realize that written language is something they can manipulate in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. Playing at writing and reading—by scribbling, drawing, pretending to write, or pretending to read—may serve to open up the activities of writing and reading for children's consideration and exploration (Bruner, 1976; Sutton-Smith, 1979).

Through play, children may come to feel that they are writers and readers long before they actually have the skills and knowledge to write and read.

Pretend play often involves reversals of everyday, real-life roles and power relationships. When they pretend, children can enact powerful roles such as mother, father, doctor, fireman, witch, monster, writer, and reader and take on the competencies that come with these roles, as Joshua did when he "wrote" and "read" the "ABC News." In doing this, Joshua assumed the confidence and power of someone who can write and read, and engaged in writing and reading on his own terms, defining them as he was able to carry them out at the moment.

Play thus encourages children to act as if they are already competent in and about to control the activity under consideration: they can act as if they know how to cook, put out fires, kill monsters, read books, or write stories. Playing with the roles of writer and reader can give children a sense of ownership of these roles. Through play, children may come to feel that they are writers and readers long before they actually have the necessary skills and knowledge to write and read. The feelings of competence and control that can be seen in children such as Jennifer and Joshua are likely to nourish assumptions and expectations about becoming literate, and to give children the motivation to work at learning to write and read.

Literacy and relationships

While activities like talking, playing, and drawing are closely linked to writing and reading, and while their use often intertwine and overlap, there are no direct or inevitable transitions between earlier- and later-developed symbol systems. Whether and how children make connections between talking, playing, drawing, and writing and reading depends on the children's interests and personalities, on what is available and valued in their particular culture, on how the people around them use writing and reading in their own lives, and how these people initiate and respond to children's writing and reading activities.

In other words, early literacy development does not simply happen; rather, it is part of a social process, embedded in children's relationships with parents, siblings, grandparents, friends, caretakers, and teachers. To understand the beginnings of literacy, one must study the environments in which young children develop, and the ways in which these settings provide opportunities for children to become involved with books, paper, and writing materials. Early experiences with literacy are part of the relationships, activities, and settings of young children's everyday lives. It is people who make writing and reading interesting and meaningful to young children. Family members, caretakers, and teachers play critical roles in early literacy development by serving as models, providing materials, demonstrating their use, offering help, instruction, and encouragement, and communicating hopes and expectations. To their interactions with young children, these people bring their own attitudes and expectations, both conscious and unconscious, about writing and reading, and about the child's eventual development as a writer and reader (Gundlach, McLane, Stott & McNamee, 1985).

The "literacy lessons" parents, other family members, and caretakers provide for young children may be embedded in playful responses to pretend writing and reading. For example, when Jennifer read her "leaf book," she expected her father to appreciate her reading and he did, entering into her pretense as a receptive audience. He also helped her find an ending to her story, perhaps intuitively letting her know that stories *should* have endings. In doing this, he was accepting his daughter's playful, nonliteral performance as it was presented, and then using it to expand her knowledge about literacy. In treating his child's rough approximations of reading as if they were the real thing, Jennifer's father was responding in much the same spirit in which many parents respond to their infant's babblings and early vocalizations. As Bruner and others have pointed out, many parents do not correct their infants' rough approximations of mature speech, but rather respond with pleasure and sympathetic interpretations of what they think their child might be trying to communicate (Bruner, 1975; 1983).

The parents of Jennifer and Joshua are college educated, middle-class professionals. In many such families, where literacy is both valued and taken for granted, parents seem to assume that their children will become literate without early instruction on their part. It may be that their confidence allows these parents to take a casual and playful approach to their children's early explorations of writing and reading. However, these same parents are likely to provide a great many literacy activities—such as reading

to their children and providing opportunities for scribbling, drawing and writing—along with informal assistance and "instruction," often without being aware that they are doing anything to facilitate their children's literacy development (Gundlach et al., 1985; Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984).

On the other hand, a small group of inner-city parents and children studied by McLane did not feel they could take their children's literacy development for granted. These were parents whose own experience with school has been problematic, and who were less confident about themselves as writers and readers, and less confident about their children's development as writers and readers. However, they had little confidence in the schools their children attended. These parents generally took a more direct, didactic approach to their children's literacy development, offering deliberately organized writing and reading activities and explicit instruction in letter formation, phonics, and spelling (McLane, 1988; and see Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988).

Ernestine Taylor, for example, is poor and black, and was living on welfare in a rough inner-city neighborhood in Chicago. She had six children, of whom Tiffanie was the youngest. She worried about the gangs in the neighborhood, and the lure of life "out on the streets." She had little faith in the local public schools, which had not done well by her older children, and was determined that Tiffanie would do better. When her daughter was about 3, Mrs. Taylor began buying Tiffanie reading

There is no single "early literacy curriculum."

readiness workbooks and teaching her letters and sounds. Her mother paid close attention to her daughter's efforts to write and read, offering help, criticism, and encouragement. By the time she was 4½, Tiffanie could write the ABC's from memory; by the time she was 5, she could write her name and read simple children's stories, and Mrs. Taylor reported that they read the Bible together every day, with Tiffanie reading the "easy" words and her mother the "hard" ones. Mrs. Taylor took great pride and pleasure in Tiffanie's writing and reading achievements, feelings which she communicated to her daughter.

In the Asian immigrant families studied by Bambi Schieffelin (Schieffelin & Cochran-Smith, 1984), the importance of literacy was emphasized in somewhat different ways; for example, writing and reading letters to and from relatives in Vietnam was a frequent and important family event. Also, in these families, school aged children were often asked to help their parents and other older family members with writing and reading tasks, such as translating and reading notes from school, writing notes to school, and filling out medical, financial and job-related forms. These literacy "role reversals" may have made children in these families particularly conscious of the importance of writing and reading.

These brief descriptions of family literacy events highlight some of the contrasts in children's early encounters with literacy. They also suggest that early literacy can develop in more than one way, and there is no single "early literacy curriculum." Parents (and others) may organize literacy activities for children, or children may initiate them themselves. These activities may be conducted casually and playfully, or they may be structured as deliberate, work-like situations. In these activities, parents convey bits of information, knowledge, and skills related to writing and reading. And perhaps more important, they communicate significant messages about the value and importance of reading and writing, and about the child as a potential writer and reader.

The beginning of writing

Early writing activities tend to be more visible than early reading activities because they involve making something. If given crayons or pencils, children usually begin to scribble around the age of 18 months; they find scribbling interesting because it leaves a visible trace—they have made something that didn't exist before. When children encounter print in their environment, they use this visual information in their scribbling and pretend writing. Marie Clay (1975) has shown that as scribbling develops, it begins to incorporate various features of conventional written language, such as linearity, horizontality, and repetition. As children learn that marks and letters represent or stand for something, they are developing an understanding of what Clay calls the "sign concept"—which is of central importance in learning to write and read.

Clay's work has made it clear that children's early writing efforts reflect their close attention to the written language in the world around them, and that they are struggling to make sense of print as they use it for a variety of purposes of their own. Support for Clay's findings about the deliberateness of children's early writing efforts comes from other researchers who have observed that children's scribble writing differs from culture to culture; for example, scribbling by children who speak Arabic or Hebrew looks quite different from scribbling by English-speaking children (Harste, Woodward & Burke, 1984). These observations indicate that scribbling and pretend writing should not be viewed as random, meaningless behavior but rather as evidence of learning in progress.

Robert Gundlach (1982) has argued that beginning writers need to master the functions, uses and purposes of writing; the forms and features of written language; and the processes of writing. Children must learn what writing can do, and, in particular, what they can do with writing. They must learn what writing looks like—its distinctive orthographic features and the various forms of written products such as lists, stories, and poems. And they must learn how writing is produced. In environments that encourage experimentation with writing materials, children begin to master each of these dimensions long before they are able to produce messages that are generally readable or interpretable by others.

A child named Rachel wrote a series of letters to her grandmother. These letters provide glimpses of one child learning about each of these dimensions of writing. The

first letter her mother observed was written when she was 2½ years old, not long after her brother Joshua's sixth birthday. When Joshua was being urged to write thank-you letters, Rachel made a series of wavy lines on a piece of paper and told her mother it was a "thank-you letter to Grandma." About six months later, Rachel made letterlike marks on a piece of lined paper and told her mother it said "Dear Grandma and Grandpa. Thank you for the lots of presents. Love, Rachel." She then asked her mother to "get the stuff to mail it to them."

A year and a half after this, when Rachel was 4½ and Joshua had recently turned 8, Rachel took a piece of her brother's lined stationery and made neat rows of letters and letterlike shapes (in no apparent order). Then she said to her mother, "I want to write a letter. I have to write a thank-you note to Grandma." She asked, "How do you spell 'Dear Grandma I love my presents'?" Her mother wrote this out for her. Rachel copied "Dear Grandma," then stopped, saying "this is boring," and asked her mother to write the rest. Her mother did, and the finished letter was mailed to her grandmother. Here, as happens with many young writers, Rachel's ambition outran her patience with the mechanics of writing. Because her mother was willing to serve as a scribe, Rachel was able to complete the letter.

As Rachel's writing skills developed, she was able to manage more of the mechanics of writing herself. When she was about 5, she wrote a message to her father for Father's Day (on the back of a commercial greeting card). This time Rachel composed the text, her mother supplied the spelling, and Rachel did all the writing herself:

EAT TOO
MUCH TICKLES
AND ONE
SCOOP OF
SPAGHETTI

In writing this message, Rachel was working hard to produce "real" or conventional writing, while at the same time she was taking a playful approach to its content.

The evolution of Rachel's writing from wavy lines to letterlike marks to mixtures of letters and letterlike shapes is similar to the developmental patterns identified by Clay and other researchers (Clay, 1975; Temple, Nathan & Burris, 1982). Only the playful note to her father resembles conventional writing, but each of the letters reflects Rachel's developing understanding of what writing is, and her increasing ability to use and control it. This developmental progression of control and skill is similar to that of many young writers who begin to experiment with writing in supportive environments.

As she wrote these letters, Rachel was learning about one particular form of writing; she was learning about the mechanics of writing and the process of composing a written text—including the fact that she could ask for and receive assistance; and she was learning that she could use writing for something—in this case, to imitate her brother, to make contact with some of the important people in her life, and, in a larger sense, to participate in an activity that is valued by her family and her culture.

It is important to point out that while there are patterns in early writing and reading behaviors, the course of literacy development is not neatly linear and it does not occur in fixed sequences; different children develop skills at different ages and there are no reliable developmental milestones as there are in the course of physical growth and development. Writing and reading development depend a great deal on a child's particular interests and circumstances (Dyson, 1985; Sulzby, 1986).

The course of literacy development does not occur in fixed sequences . . . there are no reliable developmental milestones as in physical growth and development.

The beginnings of reading

Young children can begin to learn about the complex process of deriving meaning from print long before they can decode or even recognize letters. Susan Kontos has pointed out that "Before they become readers, young children must learn why people read and what people do when they read (1986, p.58)." As in learning about writing, young children begin to understand the enterprise of reading from observing and participating in activities with family members and other competent readers. When young children see other people reading, and when others read to them or involve them in other activities related to reading, they become familiar with print and some of its uses. For example, when they see people who are important to them reading a recipe to bake a cake, reading a newspaper to find out what movies are on TV, or reading letters from distant relatives in Vietnam, young children experience reading as a meaningful activity and part of everyday life. In addition, many adults point out print to children, helping them notice a particular configuration of letters such as the spelling of their name or the name of a favorite brand of breakfast cereal. In this way, young children may develop a "sight vocabulary" of words like "STOP," "Crest," and "McDonald's" (Heath, 1986, p.20; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984).

Reading books to children is a powerful way of introducing them to literacy, and it is the one early experience that has been identified as making a difference in later success in learning to read in school (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985). But this is not usually the reason that adults, particularly parents, read to young children. More often, they do it because they find it enjoyable, they see that children enjoy it, and they may believe that reading nourishes children's minds and enriches their relationships. When adults read to children, the occasion tends to be warm and intimate; parents, caretakers, and older children often hold young children on their laps or sit close to them while reading aloud, and their attention is focused on their interaction with the child. The reader is usually sensitive to what interests the child, and what he or she finds scary, exciting or amusing. Reading often includes conversations about the characters in the book, about what they might be thinking and feeling, and about experiences in the child's own life

that are related to those in the book (Lindfors, 1984; Deloache, 1984).

As children are read to they acquire an enormous amount of information about reading and the world of books. They learn what books are, what you do with them, and how you talk about them (Snow & Ninio, 1986; Teale, 1982). They learn that written words can create imaginary worlds beyond the immediate here and now. They learn that written language has its own rhythms and conventions. They learn about specific features of written languages: for example, that the black marks on the page are letters and words, and that print goes from left to right and from top to bottom on the page. Gradually, children learn that the reader is reconstructing the story through the words written on the page—that print has a precise and unchanging meaning. And, perhaps most important, they come to expect that books will be interesting, challenging, exciting, and comforting, developing, in Holdaway's words, "high expectations of print" (1979).

One way that children show us what they are learning from being read to is through pretending to read storybooks by themselves. Don Holdaway was probably the first to point out that very young children who are read to frequently spend a great deal of time on their own with favorite storybooks, pretending to read them and reenacting the behaviors they observed while they were being read to. In observing a number of children between the ages of 2 and 5 "reading" favorite storybooks, Holdaway was struck by how hard the children worked to recapture the meaning of the stories: "They have remembered very little of the surface verbal level; what they have remembered most firmly is meanings (Holdaway, 1979, p.44)." The children were not giving a memorized rendition of a story, but were, instead, working to construct the message of the story using the rhythms and sounds of language in which they first heard that message.

Elizabeth Sulzby (1985) describes a progression of changes in children's pretend reading as they gradually approach independent reading. Preschoolers' reading of favorite books is, for the most part, guided by "reading" the pictures in the book. Young children hold the book and turn the page quite deliberately, while naming or commenting on what they see in the pictures. In time, and as they become more familiar with the story, they "read" the book by making up a story, creating a rough story line that follows the sequence of pictures. Gradually the language they use in "reading" (while still looking at the pictures), sounds more like real reading—the child's voice and intonation come to sound like written language read aloud.

Children at ages 3, 4, or 5 may give close renditions or even verbatim recitations of stories they have heard frequently. As Sulzby and Holdaway have observed, children do not simply memorize the text but work from a strong sense of what the story should sound like, and they work to retrieve and reconstruct the meaning of the text. Children strive to get the exact wording—they sometimes hesitate, correct themselves, or ask others for help. Young children's independent efforts to read books demonstrate the wealth of knowledge about books, print, and narrative they acquire while they are being read to.

It is clear that over the months and years of being read to, children learn many of the subtle details of behavior and speaking that go with reading a book. Pretend reading allows children to role-play, to reenact and try out the behaviors, skills and thinking processes that are part of reading. This long period of play brings children very close to actual reading.

Conclusion

Early literacy development is closely tied to the specifics of young children's relationships and activities. To these relationships and activities, children bring their curiosity, their interest in communicating and interacting with others, and their inclination to be a part of family and community life. They also bring their desire to use and control materials and tools that they perceive as important to the people around them—their urge to "do it myself". And they bring their willingness to seek help from more proficient writers and readers. When they interact with more competent writers and readers, children serve as "spontaneous apprentices" (in George Miller's phrase), learning about written language and how to use and control it for a range of different purposes.

Early literacy development is closely tied to the specifics of young children's relationships and activities.

Literacy, then, is closely tied to specific social and cultural contexts, and it is both an individual intellectual achievement and a form of cultural knowledge that enables participation in a range of groups and activities that in some way involve writing and reading. It is both what children and what other people bring to interactions around writing and reading that shape what children learn and how they come to see the eventual place of literacy in their own lives. In different ways, from intuitive and playful collaboration to carefully organized instruction, parents (and sometimes other family members and friends) not only give children tools and opportunities for writing and reading, they also give them reasons to write and read, and reasons to want to master the skills needed for mature writing and reading (Gundlach et al., 1985).

What is the relationship between early experiences with literacy and later, long-term literacy development? There are as yet no definitive answers to this question, but as in other aspects of psychological development, we assume that there is a relationship between early literacy experience and later mature literacy. How this relationship unfolds for a particular child will depend on several factors which interact with one another in complex ways. These include the child's interests, temperament, and personality, opportunities at home and in the neighborhood for writing and reading, as well as the nature and quality of the instruction the child encounters in school.

Learning is also affected by the continuity—or lack of continuity—between the child's experiences with literacy

at home and those encountered in school. Some children have a difficult time making connections between home and school experiences with writing and reading. Most children know something about writing and reading by the time they start school. The hard work for teachers, as Courtney Cazden (1988) and Shirley Brice Heath (1983) in particular have demonstrated, comes in discovering what children already know about writing and reading and then helping them make connections with what the school wants them to know.

We believe that young children stand the best chance of developing a good foundation for writing and reading if their learning about literacy is anchored in their relationships with family members, caretakers, peers, and other members of the community, and if it is tied to contexts and activities that have personal meaning and value for them. How literacy ultimately develops will depend on whether writing and reading become meaningful parts of the child's life. This, in turn, will depend on people who are important to the child—both inside and outside of school—and on the messages they communicate about the child's development as a writer and reader.

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A Book Is a Child's Companion

by Jeree H. Pawl, Ph.D., Adapted from an address to the American Library Association, June, 1987

When books come into one's life in the context of human warmth, nurturance, and relevance to one's own interests and needs, they maintain this quality forever. It is not only the characters in a book that engage our shared humanness—the book itself somehow becomes a companion. For many people, just the sight of a book gives a sense of companionship: They look forward to encountering characters in a new book, look back on books previously treasured, and also remember the people who sensitively brought to life the possibilities of all the human worlds that live in books.

If we want our children to enjoy the companionship of books, we must allow the child's contribution to the relationship to be wholly salient. We want the child to know that he is relevant to the book. So as we look at a book with a child, we are flexible about how that process goes. We forget that we know it has a beginning, middle and end, and we allow the child's pleasure and interest to dictate what it is to which we will attend, and of what the interaction will consist.

We attend to the child's agenda. We do not wrestle with Martha in order to turn the page to which her attention is riveted in order to get on with the story, but we linger with her, to puzzle together as to why the little girl's foot below the water in the bathtub appears not to exist. We do our best to explicate the demands of perspective the illustration demonstrates, and we spend the time we need to cover and uncover, make disappear and reappear, our own faces and hands, until this loses its interest for the child. Only then do we proceed in the book. It is not unlike taking our child to the beach to view the vast ocean or to admire the sunset while acknowledging that the tiny sandcrab that scurries over the toe of his sneaker and totally captures his attention is a wholly worthy competitor for our intent and deserves our closest mutual attention. We are flexible, and we care about what our small friend's interests are because only then can he bring his whole self to the encounter. And that is what we want. We want the child to know that he is relevant to the book.

Literature not only allows but asks of us that we bring our whole experience to it—that we allow it to evoke our memories and our feelings and then reach for some commonality of understanding that enriches us and enriches what we read. This is what we expect of the adult reader of literature. We must be sure then that we allow this to be true of the experience of children, especially of our infants and toddlers. They must be allowed to muse on what calls for musing, skip the scary part if they want to, name with pleasure that which is recognized (and name it again and again), and stop when they are ready. This is what preserves the mutuality and ensures the infant's and

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toddler's contribution of self to the process.

Many children's books are designed with just this relevancy and request for mutuality. Our job is not to interfere with our author's often brilliant understanding of what is relevant to a child, what captures him in sight and sound, and how reciprocal a relationship there is between that author and the child. (It is, by the way, just this mutuality which makes children's books so different from most children's television, which, with its formulaic, jazzed up, didactic style, overwhelms the child's whole sensorium, wanting nothing from him but a sponge-like absorption and diminishing the possible horizons of the child's own world view.)

As we move with the child from the first recognition of the image of a dog—the first enchanting triumph—to remembering with her dogs she has known—Grandma's dog who jumped up and knocked her over and the puppy on the street that licked her hand and made a puddle on the sidewalk—we make the art of the book her own. The child owns it with what she and we weave around it. It is embedded with the familiar and becomes richly and personally evocative. This process is clearly a part of the oral tradition: The story teller adapts the story to the listener, and the listener contributes his own visual images, his own understanding, and his own reactions. Even a child who has no access to books, but who is sung to and talked to, and for whom stories are created or to whom parents tell stories of their own childhood, will, if then introduced to books properly, learn to love the stories to be found in those books. In some sense, in the early years, the parent is the collaborative interpreter of the pictures or story written in a book to his own child—making sure that the book touches the child's world as he wants it to, and expanding the pictures or text with what the child brings to them. The experience of "being read to" becomes the same as being told a story—a story which is told because it is relevant to the child and because the telling is responsive to the child's desire.

As the child grows, she not only recognizes the image of the dog but also begins to identify with the dog—who is lost from his mommy, who has made a mess of his room, or who has found a scrawny chicken to be his friend. Now another's creation has begun to touch the child's experience in a new way; the child's own experience expands to include the experience of others. Characters in books become the child's companions. Books themselves become companions.

Babies and toddlers are enriched by books. Even more important, the relationships between very young children and their parents are enriched by books. Books provide a source of mutual pleasure for parent and child that is likely to last a lifetime. We introduce infants and toddlers to books not simply because of what they will learn from them, but so that they will grow to love them. It is a gift beyond measure.

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What's It Mean To Share a Story?

by

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What does it mean to share a story? For a two-year-old, sharing a story can mean a time to cuddle with someone you love, a time to hear about exotic creatures like giraffes and elephants in far-away places, or a time to talk about getting a new baby sister. What a two-year-old does not realize is that sharing a story is also a time for learning—a time to learn new words and new ways of putting words together, a time to learn about story structure and about print. By sharing books with adults, children also learn about what it means to read, to learn, and to know.

Children's hypotheses about how to take meaning from the world around them are strongly influenced by interactions with their caregivers. Parents' styles of interaction as they read books with children convey explicit and implicit messages about how to think and where knowledge comes from. Shirley Brice Heath (1982) found striking differences in book reading between parents in a working class community and more educated parents. While both groups read frequently to their children and seemed to believe that reading was important, they differed in the way they encouraged children to interact with text. Parents in the working-class community tended to stick to the story and encouraged their children to sit quietly and listen. In contrast, parents in the other group urged their children to participate in the story, and they would deviate from the text to make connections with other experiences. Heath suggests that these differences in parents' reading style reflect different attitudes toward reading. I would go further and suggest that differences in parents' reading style reflect how parents use language in other settings as well.

Reading books as a context for learning language

Reading books is a powerful context for learning language. Although we do not understand completely why this is so, verbal routines may play a role. Ninio and Bruner (1978) speculated that children learn the names for objects through participating in recurring dialogue rather than through imitation. Reading books provides an occasion for just such recurring dialogue. And, when mothers choose to discuss features of the story that most interest the child, it is easier for the child to learn new words. Tomasello and Farrar (1986) have demonstrated that children learn new vocabulary words better when both mother and child share, and recognize that they share, a common focus.

The extent to which book reading gives children an opportunity to practice their language skills depends largely on the discourse style of the adult conversational partner. In a study of middle class families, Wheeler (1983) identified developmentally sensitive changes in parent-child discourse from ages 1 to 4 years. As would be expected, labeling routines directed by relatively concrete questions ("What's the name of that?") were more characteristic at the younger ages, while at the older ages, mothers tended to ask more open-ended questions that went beyond the immediate scope of the book ("Do you think that kitty will get in trouble?").

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Studies of book-reading based on family social status (SES) reveal both individual and group differences in mothers' discourse-style and suggest that these differences may have important implications for child language learning. For example, Ninio (1980) notes that lower-SES mothers' style may be adequate for early lexical development, but that it is not sensitive to changes in the infants' needs and thus will not support more complex language developments. Additionally, Blank (1975) suggests that the deficits in reading and school performance more common among lower SES preschool-age children may be due to limited home experiences with open-ended questions such as *why*, *how*, and *when*.

Differences in parental behavior as predictors of children's language

Socioeconomic differences have been found for many aspects of maternal speech thought to promote children's language acquisition. Compared with middle-class mothers, lower-class mothers are reported to be less stimulating and less responsive, less sophisticated

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in language use, more restrictive, more controlling, and less likely to describe a child's experience for him in words. Hoff-Ginsberg (1989) has shown that differences in the interactive setting and in mothers' beliefs about childrearing cannot account for social status differences in mothers' speech to children. Rather, she suggests that SES differences in maternal speech are due to fundamental differences in mothers' conversational and social skills—with adults as well as children.

The relation between SES and parental speech style is often accounted for in one of two ways. Bernstein (1960) proposed that low SES is a marker for a constellation of education, social, and economic disadvantages that has a negative impact on parental functioning and the nature of parent-child communication. Alternatively, others (e.g., Maccoby, 1980) speculate that social class differences in parenting style and in child competence are due in part to the inclusion of high-stress, multi-problem families in studies of lower-class groups. Arguments that favor a more general association between parental style and child competence would be strengthened if the same parental behaviors predicted child outcomes between and within social classes. This approach was taken by Bee and her colleagues (Bee, Barnard, Eyres, Gray, Hammond, Spietz, Snyder, & Clark, 1982) in a longitudinal examination of child language and IQ within and across two levels of maternal education. They report that the quality of the home and ratings of parent-infant interaction in the first year of life were predictive of 4-year child outcomes in both high (more than high school) and low education (high school or less) subsamples. They found that qualitative differences in mother-child interaction predicted child outcome above and beyond the effect of social class as indicated by maternal education.

In-depth studies of at-risk populations suggests that individual strengths may act to buffer development in otherwise compromised circumstances. One such study is our Seattle study of poverty families. This project, under the direction of Kathryn Barnard, began as a comparison of two styles of early nursing intervention to pregnant women who lacked both financial and social resources. After the intervention phase of the project (pregnancy through the child's first birthday), we followed mothers and children through the child's fifth birthday. Standardized developmental testing and multiple observational assessments of mother-child interaction occurred both in families' homes and in our laboratory at the University of Washington Child Development and Mental Retardation Center.

Despite the "risky" nature of the study families, there was considerable variability in quality of mother-child interaction during teaching, mealtimes, and in play. Within this exclusively high-risk sample, the quality of mother-child interaction at one year of age was more strongly predictive of cognitive and linguistic development over the second and third years of life than was family social status or mother's life stress, social, and psychological functioning. Unlike middle-class samples, but similar to other poverty samples, in this study, children's scores on tests of language and cognition declined markedly between 24 and 36 months of age. The mean score on the Bayley Mental Devlopment Index (MDI) at 24 months was slightly above 100. Yet at 36 months, on the Preschool Language Scale, 71 percent of the sample earned scores lower than that expected of most children their age. Thirty-six percent of the study children scored below age level on the Auditory Comprehension subscale and 64 percent scored below age level on the Verbal Ability subscale. Twenty-seven percent scored below age level on both subscales (Morisset, Barnard, Greenberg, Booth, & Spieker, 1990). While performance appeared to decline for the group as a whole, the ranking among children stayed relatively stable. Scores on a subset of language from the Bayley at 24 months were highly correlated with subsequent language ability at ages 30 and 36 months. Additionally, significant sex differences favoring girls were found on multiple language measures from 20 through 36 months of age (Morisset, 1991).

Data from age five indicates that children's language ability, in particular, is susceptible to social risk. At age five, 31 of the children were located for follow-up testing. Overall performance on the Weschler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI) was in the average range; however, profile analysis of the individual test scores tells a slightly different story. Approximately 20 percent (7 cases) showed a significant discrepancy in their Verbal and Performance Scale IQ's of at least 14 points. In 6 of the 7 cases, Performance IQ exceeded Verbal IQ. This pattern of scoring suggests that the children's problem solving skills were considerably better than their repertoire of verbal knowledge. Unlike the Performance Scale, which taps a child's ability to generate solutions to novel problems, the Verbal Scale is highly dependent on the child's accumulated experience. It is noteworthy that the only child to show a significant verbal strength (relative to his Performance Scale score) was a boy enrolled in a combined home-clinic speech therapy program. Taken in sum, the findings from this 5-year longitudinal study suggest that the pre-school years are an important target for language intervention efforts.

Messages: To Ricky and Brian from Mom

Written transcripts of mother-infant interaction during lab visits at 13, 20, and 30 months of age show that, beginning in the first years of life, parents convey potent messages about the function of communication, about knowledge and where it comes from. Two cases will be discussed here. Ricky, Brian and their mothers represent two of the families in our sample whose circumstances were relatively benign. Both mothers were married during pregnancy, they were not receiving welfare support, and were of average intelligence (their IQ's were above 90). Both children owned books, although neither mother reported reading to her child more than twice per week. The

following excerpts illustrate very different messages about the locus of knowledge and authority. Specifically.

- Who decides what to talk about, or what to do next?
- Is the mother responsive to the bids of her child, or does she stay with her own agenda?
- To what extent is the child invited to participate in the active construction of meaning (or "what's going on")?

Interactions at age 13 months (during a snack of juice, cheese and crackers with mother)

Note: XXX indicates an unintelligible word or phrase

Ricky and his mother

Mother: Is that good cheese?
Mother: Nummy cheese.
Ricky: (Offers Mother a piece of his cheese)
Mother: You eat it.
Mother: Put it in your mouth.
Ricky: XXX (vocalizes and looks toward wall)
Mother: What you lookin' at?
Ricky: XXX (vocalizes and looks around room)
Mother: Huh?
Ricky: (Reaches toward cheese in Mother's hand)
Mother: Want some more cheese?
Mother: More cheese?

Brian and his mother

Mother: Here (sets cracker down on tray)
Brian: XXX (vocalizes at cracker Mother has set down)
Mother: (no response, then about 10 seconds later . . .)
Mother: Mmm!
Brian: (offers cracker to Mother)
Mother: No.
Mother: Eat.
Mother: Brian . . .
Mother: No.
Brian: (persists with his offer)
Mother: Don't drop the cracker on the floor.
Mother: No. No.
Brian: XXX (persists with his offer)
Mother: No, Mama doesn't want one.
Mother: You eat it.

In this example, Ricky's mother asks and answers her own question about the cheese, thus modeling verbal turn-taking. She is responsive to Ricky's communicative bids and asks for clarification when she needs it. Ricky is an active and respected participant in the interaction. In contrast, Brian's mother is less responsive. Their interaction feels "out of synch"; they don't match "meaning." Brian must persist over several conversational turns before his mother addresses his offer as such.

Interactions at age 20 months (during a snack of apple juice and crackers with mother)

Ricky and his mother

Mother: Whada we got?
Ricky: Pop.
Mother: No, it's not pop.
Ricky: Pop.
Mother: Apple juice?
Ricky: Yep.
Mother: Apple juice.
Mother: See? (shows Ricky the apple on the jar label)
Mother: See the apple (on the label)?
Mother: Wanna cracker?
Mother: Wanna cracker?
Ricky: Yeah.
Mother: Okay, see if we can figure out how to get them open.
Ricky: XXX (takes cracker package from Mother)
Mother: You wanna do it, huh?
Ricky: (struggles with package)
Mother: Can I try it?
Mother: Can I open it?

Brian and his mother

Mother: Want another bite (of cracker)?
Brian: No (and shakes head, no)
Mother: Yes (hands cracker to Brian); Mmm!
Brian: (tries to hand cracker to Mother)
Mother: You hold it.
Brian: XXX (persists with offer)
Mother: (takes cracker)
Mother: Mom's gonna take a drink of apple juice (she does, and Brian goes off to play)
Mother: Brian.
Brian: XXX (continues playing)
Mother: Come here.
Brian: (does not respond; Mother goes over to him, picks him up from the toys, puts him in a chair and scoots him to the table)
Brian: (cries)
Mother: Now hush (hands him a cracker)
Brian: (cries)
Mother: Eat your cracker and sit still.

Ricky's mother engages her 20-month-old son in active problem solving. She asks him to guess what they have to drink and shows him how he can use information in his environment (the jar label) to inform his guess. Opening the cracker package is a problem that Ricky asks to solve. His mother allows him to try and offers to help only when it looks like he needs it. Her help is offered, not thrust upon him.

Brian and his mother have very different plans. His mother wants him to eat a snack; unfortunately, Brian doesn't want to. Although he is asked and tells his mother "no," she persists with her plan. Brian's clear attempts to communicate with his mother are not successful; he ends up frustrated and crying.

Interactions at age 30 months (again, during snacktime at lab visit)

Ricky and his mother

Ricky: The light, Mom (looks toward the bright camera lights)
Mother: Mmhm (yes)
Ricky: The light.
Mother: There's lots of lights.
Ricky: There's lots of lights.
Mother: There's one, two, three, four of 'em.
Mother: Five of them.
Ricky: One, one, one.
Mother: Five lights.
Mother: Can you count for me, huh?
Ricky: The light.
Ricky: One, two, four lights.
Mother: One, two, four?
Mother: What happened to three?
Ricky: Right here.
Mother: Oh, okay.
Ricky: Where's the XXX light?
Ricky: Right there (points to light)?
Mother: Okay, eat your cookie.

Brian and his mother

Mother: (reading a questionnaire)
Brian: XXX (points to what Mother is reading)
Mother: (no response)
Brian: XXX (slaps at Mother's paper and then slaps her hand as she tries to push his hand out of her way
Mother: Are you done (drinking juice)?
Brian: No.
Mother: Finish.
A few seconds pass.
Brian: Yuck.
Mother: Oh, you're full of it.
Brian: Yuck.
Mother: You're full of it.
Mother: Are you done?
Brian: Yuck.
Mother: Are you...done, right?
Brian: Yucky (shakes his head "no")
Mother: Okay, I'll take it away.
Brian: No.
Mother: Then quit it.

In this interaction, Ricky's mother expands his three-word utterance, and Ricky spontaneously imitates her more sophisticated construction. This illustrates one way that expansions can promote syntactic development. What happens when Ricky skips "three" in counting is also noteworthy: His mother asks for his reasoning rather than making a correction. Her view of knowledge is flexible; there may be more than one right answer.

The interchange between Brian and his mother is reminiscent of their earlier exchanges. Brian's bids are rebuked and lead to a negative slapping and pushing exchange. When Brian labels his juice "yuck," his mother doesn't ask for his reasoning. Unlike Ricky's mother, she sees knowledge as fixed. Because there can be only one right opinion about the juice, Brian must be "full of it."

Book reading during the same lab visit (30 months)

Ricky and his mother

Mother: Let's see...
Mother: It says "I feel" (book title)
Ricky: Yeah.
Mother: What's she...what's she doing? (cover photo of girl with mouth wide open)
Ricky: Biting.
Mother: Biting?
Ricky: Yeah.
Mother: Well, I suppose she could be doing that.

Brian and his mother

Mother: What's he doing?
Brian: He crying.
Mother: He hurt...he hit her in the head and knocked her over with his bike.
Mother: He's saying, "I'm sorry."
Brian: No.
Mother: Yes he is.
Mother: See, look.
Mother: He's touching her owie, see?
Mother: He's saying, "I'm sorry."
Brian: No not.
Brian: No not.
Mother: (turns the page)

Ricky and Brian's mothers respond very differently to their sons' interpretation of the pictures in the book. Ricky's mother stops to try to understand her son's meaning—"biting?" In contrast, Brian and his mother argue their different points of view. There is no resolution; rather, Mother exerts authority to end the argument—she turns the page.

Empirical data from a four-week intervention

These two mothers' styles convey clearly different messages about ways of thinking and knowing. And it seems reasonable to assume that such differences in adults' discourse style could influence the language development of young children in their care. Until recently, however, empirical proof of such an association has been missing. Now Whitehurst, Falco, Lonigan, Fischel, Debaryshe, Valdez-Menchaca, & Caulfield have demonstrated (1988) causal links between aspects of mother-child discourse during book reading and children's vocabulary and syntactical abilities.

The group's first study tested a four-week intervention program designed to alter parents' style of interaction during story time. Parents in the experimental group received less than one hour of one-to-one instruction in ways to encourage their children to "help tell the story" during book reading. Parents then

used these new techniques with their children for 10 minutes daily. Control families read to their children in their usual fashion and style (seven or eight times a week, in this sample) but did not receive any instruction.

At the outset of the study, the children ranged in age from 21 to 35 months. They scored in the normal range on the Denver Developmental Screening Test and on a language screening instrument. The experimental and control groups did not differ in frequency of book reading in the home, or on an observational measure of the complexity of children's expressive language (mean length of utterance: MLU). During the intervention, parent-child reading sessions in the home were audiotaped 3-4 times per week. The groups' reading styles differed in the following ways:

- Parents in the experimental group were more likely to repeat their children's utterances.
- Parents in the control group used more yes/no questions and directions, and were more likely to read the text without soliciting the child's participation.
- Children in the experimental group used more multiword utterances during reading and had a higher MLU.

At the end of the intervention, children in the experimental group outscored those in the control group on several different tests of verbal expression and reception language, and observed MLU. At follow-up nine months later, intervention effects were still apparent in tests of expressive language; the experimental group continued to outscore the control group by an average of 6 months.

SPARK: A new community-based study

These findings have piqued our interest in intervention for children at risk for language delay because of social disadvantage. We are beginning a new study to test whether the relatively simple, yet apparently potent book-sharing intervention developed by Whitehurst and his colleagues can be adapted as a community-based intervention for all parents and toddlers, including those at environmental risk for language problems. Recognizing potential social class differences in parent-child discourse during book reading and in child language outcomes, we are including both middle- and lower-class families in the study. We will thus be able to test for between-group differences as well as to determine whether the patterns of relationships are the same within higher and lower-SES groups.

During the 1991-92 academic year, we plan to offer a modified version of the Whitehurst parent-training package to approximately 150 families through the Seattle Public Library system. This project, SPARK (Seattle's Parents Are Reading to Kids) will be offered at six branch libraries. All caregivers of children between the ages of 24 and 36 months of normal developmental status will be eligible to participate. We plan to enlist both mothers and other caregivers as "parent" participants and to train them in groups of two. By extending the parent training to include nontraditional caregivers, we will broaden our sample to include, for example, children of adolescent mothers, a sub-group at particular risk for language development.

Our study will address three types of research questions:

- those that pertain to replication and the modifications necessary to implement the program on a large scale;
- those that involve understanding for whom the intervention is effective and why—for example, are there SES group differences in the frequency of parent-child book sharing? More importantly, how are individual differences related to child language outcomes within both the higher and lower SES groups?
- potential indirect effects of the intervention on more general features of the parent-child relationship—we hypothesize that the specific behaviors taught in the context of picture book sharing, particularly those that increase parents' sensitivity to child cues, will generalize to other parent-child interactions and be reflected in decreased parenting stress.

What does it mean to share a story? For many of the children in our intervention project, we hope that it will mean the enrichment of an otherwise unpredictable and/or impoverished family environment. We hope that more very young children will be urged to "help tell the story" in books and in their daily lives—and that fewer will be admonished routinely to "eat your cracker and be still."

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Shared Reading in Daycare: Successes and Challenges

by
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In her wonderful book, *Beginning to Read* (MIT Press, 1990, p.85), Marilyn Adams estimates that a typical middle class child enters first grade with 1,000 to 1,700 hours of one-on-one picture book reading, while the corresponding child from a low-income family averages 25 such hours. "Is there any chance," she asks, "that [the] first grade teacher can make up for that difference in 360 hours of one-on-twenty instruction?" The obvious answer is no.

Title XX programs, work-fare initiatives, and various job training programs have resulted in large numbers of children from low-income families receiving publicly subsidized daycare. At the Stony brook Reading and Language Project, we have been exploring daycare as an environment that might compensate for some of the impoverishment in experience with books that is the lot of many children from low-income families.

We have just completed a study with 70 three-year-olds from low-income families in five daycare centers in Suffolk County, NY. Children in each classroom in each center were assigned randomly to one of three conditions. Two treatment conditions involved an intervention called *Dialogue Reading* that we developed and have shown to be effective in other settings. This is the method that is the basis of Colleen Morisset's library-based intervention in Seattle that is described in the accompanying article. In our study, children in a school+home condition were read to at home by their parents and at school in small groups by their teachers using dialogic techniques. In a school-only treatment condition, children were read to in small groups by their teachers, but parents were not involved. Finally, in a control condition, children engaged small group toy play under the guidance of their teacher. The intervention lasted six weeks. Children were pretested and post-tested on a variety of assessments of language development.

The good news is that the intervention works in this setting. Children in the school+home condition were significantly ahead of children in the control condition on standardized tests of both receptive and expressive language; the differences were about 2/3 of a standard deviation, which corresponds to about five months of language age in this age range. Children in the school-only condition fell in between children in the control and school+home conditions. We also looked at more specific measures of vocabulary growth and found that children in the school+home group had learned large numbers of new words that were specific to the books they had shared with their parents and teachers. We are excited by these results because the effects are reasonably large for such a brief intervention, and because we had not been sure that parents of low-income children and daycare teachers would be successful dialogic readers.

SUBJECTS AND PREDICATES

At the same time, we have learned how much more we need to learn to turn daycare centers into wellheads of literacy for young children. Of the five daycare centers with which we worked, one did not implement the reading package successfully in the first place (reading only about once per week rather than once per day as encouraged), and another dropped the program as soon as we had posttested the children. Only two of the five centers have continued the reading program with enthusiasm, even though each center was informed of the positive results. A principal issue is organizational. Dialogic reading is interactional reading. It requires the child to talk and the teacher to listen and respond actively. These requirements mean that dialogic reading cannot work if a teacher tries to share a book with the whole class simultaneously. This large group reading was without exception the form of literacy experience that was employed in the daycare centers prior to our program. In contrast, we insisted on no more than a one-to-four ratio for shared reading. On paper, each center had enough staff to accomplish this arrangement, with the typical classroom/group consisting of about 14 children, a teacher, and a teacher's aide. It meant that one adult would need to care for the majority of the children while the other adult

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engaged in shared reading with a smaller group. Three such sessions of about 10 minutes each during the day would have allowed each child in each classroom a daily dose of small group shared reading, and would have required only about 30 minutes of reorganized time out of the daycare day. However, daycare centers are not by tradition organized so that children are divided among adults in a way that approximates the staff to child ratio. Rather, one adult often takes charge of a large group, while the other adult prepares materials for later use, handles problem children, or takes a well deserved break. Or both adults provide traffic control functions and handle problems as all children are engaged in play activities. Reading to children in small groups requires a different organization, and it is seen by teachers as more effortful than their typical practice. Another organizational issue has to do with training and encouraging parents to share books with their children at home. Several of our daycare centers never have parent meetings, and they are not routine in any. We have shown that parent involvement is a critical component of success, but someone has to care enough to engage parents in the process.

What are the solutions to these problems? Over the long term, one might hope for a gradual increase in the standards and practices of daycare centers so that they become more educationally relevant and so that the development of linguistic and cognitive skills in children and the involvement of parents as partners in educational goals are seen as critical components of their mission. However, that may be a very long term goal. As witness, the daycare centers that cooperated in our program are much better than the national average. For instance all are nonprofit centers whose directors hold college degrees and have a strong sense of mission. Many of the teachers are also college graduates and the facilities are appropriate and well maintained. Staff turnover is relatively low. Problems in instituting a shared reading program in these settings would be dwarfed by those that would likely be encountered in run-of-the-mill proprietary centers with low wage, high turnover staff in states with minimal regulation of daycare.

We are leaning towards using volunteers to provide one-on-one or small group shared book reading for children in daycare. The success of groups such as Literacy Volunteers of America in working with problems of adult illiteracy suggests that there is a large pool of people who will volunteer their time to advance the cause of literacy. It would take only five adults, each willing to volunteer 30 minutes a week, to staff a small group shared reading program for a typical daycare classroom. Some of these adults could probably be found among the family members of children in daycare. Retirees are another potentially large group of volunteers.

We do not underestimate the problems involved in instituting wide spread volunteer programs for shared book reading in daycare centers, or in incorporating some other mechanism for shared reading into preschool programs. The task is formidable. In justifying the effort, I turn again to Marilyn Adams, who says, "We hug [children], we give them ... good things to eat; we try to teach them to be clean and polite, good natured, thoughtful, and fair ... We must do as much with reading. In our society, their lives depend on it" (1990, p. 91).

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Reach Out and Read: A Pediatric Program to Support Emergent Literacy

by

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A young mother arrives for her appointment at the pediatric clinic, her toddler in tow. It has been a difficult morning already and she has more appointments to get to in the afternoon. As the pair enters the waiting area, an older woman with an armload of books asks, "Would you like a story?" As her toddler sidles over to the books, the mother relaxes, "This will keep him busy, and give me some time to think." Looking over, she notices her son's interest in the books, and his competence. He can name so many pictures! She tells the volunteer reader that she didn't realize he knew so much. Later, this young mother is surprised—and pleased—when the pediatrician talks with her about sharing books with her toddler and offers her a colorful children's book to take home. On the way out of the clinic she thinks, "if the doctor is giving him books, it must be important. And maybe it will keep him busy on the bus ride home."

This story and variations of it are repeated daily at the Pediatric Primary Care Center at Boston City Hospital, where a program has been developed to promote literacy and school success. Reach Out and Read (ROAR) is an innovative literacy program designed to use the pediatric visit and the pediatrician to spark an interest in books and reading among families whose children are at risk for reading failure. Created in 1989, ROAR offers training and resources to pediatricians, residents, and nurse practitioners so that they can provide guidance about reading to parents, along with free books for the children. This article describes the evolution of ROAR, its clinical implications and efficacy, as well as future directions.

Evolution of the program

The idea for ROAR came out of the work of the Child Development Project, a medical/educational collaborative within the Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at Boston City Hospital. This Project joins educators and pediatricians together to provide comprehensive services to children living in poverty. After years of identifying children at risk for learning problems and school failure due to a variety of medical and social factors, and faced with an overwhelming shortage of available quality early education program, the Child Development Project staff began to conceptualize its own intervention programs, based on needs identified through evaluation and research. Certainly one of the most distressing needs was the high rate of early reading failure and illiteracy among the children served by the hospital.

Among the most alarming statistics about inner city children is that more than 25 percent of them experience significant reading delays and subsequent school problems.[1] These children are at increased risk of school failure, with all of the attendant psychosocial morbidity: low self-esteem, teen parenthood, delinquency, and substance abuse. How could our clinic- and hospital-based Project impact on what seemed, at first glance, to be a school-based problem? The key, of course, was the recognition of the importance of early development for later academic functioning, and in particular the perspectives of emergent literacy. Simply put, pediatricians have a special opportunity to prevent early reading failure because they often have extensive contact with families during the period when the foundations of literacy are laid.*

Reach Out and Read began as a waiting room program, because parents and children were a captive audience there, often for distressingly long periods of time. Volunteers were recruited to read to the children in the waiting room, and talk with the parents about sharing books with their children. Early on, it was clear that the children were interested in the books and the parents intrigued by their children's behavior. Any books left out once the readers left quickly disappeared. We grew concerned about the availability of books and the families' financial ability to provide them to their children. What was needed was a stock of books that could be given away.

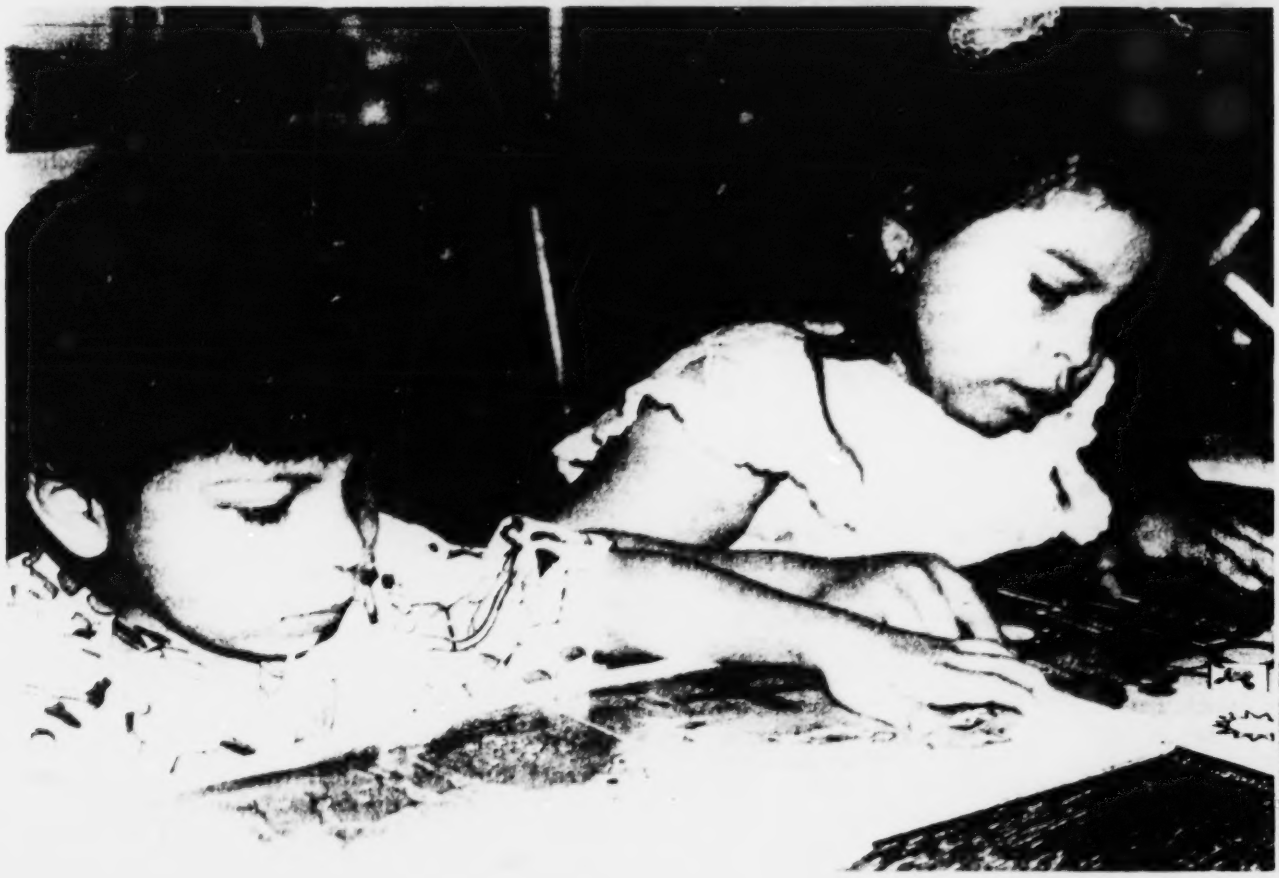
In its first year, ROAR was awarded two small grants from local foundations. The money went for high quality children's books, chosen for developmental appropriateness and purchased from the publishers at a discount of 45 to 50 percent. Over the past two years, ROAR has distributed more than 10,000 books at a cost to us of between $1.50 and $3.50 per copy. The goal is for every child to receive a free book at every visit, beginning at 6 months and continuing through age five.

The pediatrician's role

Initially, the books were set out on a shelf for the children to take. It was after we asked the clinic doctors to take a hand in distributing books themselves, however, that we began to appreciate the special potential of merging this early educational intervention with pediatric care. The frequency of contacts between the family and their pediatrician during the child's early years, the opportunity for forging a positive trusting relationship between parent and doctor, and the potency of the doctor's "word" with the parent, are significant factors in the potential impact of this intervention.

Throughout early childhood, pediatricians enjoy frequent contacts with children and their parents.

*Throughout, we use the terms, "pediatrician" and "doctor" to refer as well to nurse practitioners, who function in the same capacity.



SUBJECTS AND PREDICATES

Health supervision visits are regularly scheduled at 6, 9, 12, 15, 18 and 24 months, and at six month intervals thereafter. Children with chronic conditions such as asthma or failure to thrive (who may also be at increased educational risk) come much more frequently. The pediatric visit is a chance for intimate discussion between the doctor and parent about topics which are of great importance to the parents, i.e., both the particular child being seen, and the family as a whole. The pediatrician brings to the visit a knowledge of the family built up of repeated contacts over time, and an implicit license to ask all kinds of questions. For instance, it is possible, within the pediatric visit, to ask parents how far they got in school, and whether they ever had, or still do have difficulty reading. Few other professionals involved with the child have access to such sensitive information. Parents come to the visit with heightened attention, eager and perhaps anxious that their child receive a positive evaluation. When, in the context of this relationship, the doctor says that children's books are important, many parents listen.

With this sense of the possibilities in mind, we began to work with the pediatricians in small groups to convince them to incorporate literacy interventions into their regular health supervision or "well child" visits. Together with the pediatricians we worked to develop time-efficient ways of talking with parents about literacy that respect cultural diversity and the broad range of the parents' literacy skills. The following section presents some of the lessons learned over the two years of the program.

Intervention strategies and their implications

For any educational intervention to work within the context of pediatric care, it has to be squeezed into a visit which is already crowded with information about nutrition, safety, behavior, and development. Literacy development can meet this requirement, because the focus on books provides an opportunity to deal with a number of issues all at once. For example, the pediatrician can talk about the infant's need to discover the world by mouthing books and other objects, or the toddler's need to exercise autonomy in determining which book to look at, and for how long.

Talking with parents about ways to use books and stories to establish routines at home (e.g. at bedtime), and to keep busy toddlers occupied are important interventions that families can use. One mother returned to the clinic asking for another copy of a book she had received. "My daughter insists on reading it every night; by now it's in tatters."

For many parents, the books provide a needed structure for positive interactions with their young children. One mother explained, "It gives us something we can do *together*. The book-parent-child situation elicits cuddling and verbal give and take. When first introducing the idea of sharing books, we stress that the parent's job is to "make it feel good," so that the child

builds the association between books and mother or father's love. In many ways, the book functions as a prop, a concrete object which can facilitate communication of abstract concepts. Rather than lecture a parent about facilitating language development, we can model book sharing with the child, then hand the parent the book. We talk with parents about "book sharing" rather than "reading," in order to encourage them to depart from printed text and to solicit the child's active participation, and so that reading-disabled parents can still take an active, positive role.

Boston City Hospital serves a large number of first-generation immigrant families, from Cape Verde, the Caribbean, and Central America, places which have a tradition of oral stories for children, but not of children's books. Oral story telling provides rich stimulation to verbal language development, but does not prepare children to succeed in traditional North American elementary schools.[2] Children's books present a concrete example of the need for parents and children to adopt new cultural practices while maintaining traditional ones. The pediatrician can support parents in this balancing act by asking about the stories they heard as children, and presenting books as an option, but not a replacement.

The books often serve as a catalyst for forming a trusting relationship between provider and parent. The parents who use our clinic care deeply about their child's future ability to succeed in school. When the pediatrician hands an infant a colorful board book, and remarks on how the child focuses, vocalizes, and reaches, the parent hears the message that his or her child is *smart*. This shared appreciation of the child's interest and competence, like demonstration of the Brazelton Newborn Assessment in the nursery, allows the pediatrician to join with the parent on the basic level of regard for the child as a person. The pediatrician's manifest interest in the child's learning forges a connection with the parent around the mutual goal of the child's eventual success in school. The implicit message is that the parent's actions can have an important beneficial effect on their child's future.

Books can serve a diagnostic function, as well as a therapeutic one. We encourage pediatricians to keep a stock of books in each examination room, and to hand the child a book early in the visit. This often elicits behaviors which might not otherwise appear in the office. Watching the child handle the book provides information about fine motor and visual development. Observing how the parent and child jointly negotiate control of the book may give information about the parent's approach to a teaching task, and more broadly, about the parent-infant relationship. For instance, some parents become quite demanding when their infants do not attend to the book; others use effective strategies to capture and hold their infant's attention but are able to terminate when the infant has had enough.

An atmosphere of support for children's learning also permeates the waiting area. Walking into the clinic, one sees groups of children clustered around a story or busy coloring. The volunteer readers model positive interactions with the children, and also take time to talk with parents. For parents who are isolated because of the violence in their neighborhood or their lack of social network, the experience of talking about their children with a supportive adult can be significant.

Program efficacy and future directions

ROAR's impact on the culture of the pediatric clinic is palpable, but difficult to quantify. Acceptance of the program among pediatricians is evident in the increasing number of books given away and the positive feedback we have gotten from them. Initially, books were to be distributed only at health supervision (well-child) visits, but soon specialty clinics began using the books as well. Recently, funding has been obtained to make regular book distribution a part of the package of care for HIV-exposed children.

A long-term effort to document program efficacy is underway. As a first step, 81 parent interviews were analyzed, looking for an association between exposure to ROAR and reports of the child's interest in books.[3] Parents were asked to describe everything their child did during the preceding day, and to state their child's three favorite activities. To lessen bias, parent were not told until later that the focus of the questions had to do with books. Overall, parents who had received books from their doctor were four times as likely to report spontaneously that their children liked books, and this association was twice as great among parents receiving government income support (AFDC). A randomized, longitudinal trial of a pediatric book intervention is underway, as well as a microanalytic study of parent-infant-book interactions and their relationship to measure of attachment, interaction, and cognition.

The scope of ROAR continues to increase, as new needs are identified and new strategies developed. Recently we have begun to offer parent workshops in the clinic, as a way to augment the guidance provided by pediatricians. ROAR supplies books to a neighborhood health center pediatric clinic, and other sites want to adopt the program. Fund raising is an ongoing challenge. Although the cost per child is minimal (less than that of a single blood test), there is to date no budget within the health center which includes funds for books. If research and experience prove that pediatric support for literacy development contributes to improved outcomes for children, then the institutional commitment to this approach will follow.

Conclusion

Introducing books into the primary care setting creates a true medical-educational collaboration: the medical status of the doctor and access to the patients enhances the educational intervention, while the intrinsically educational nature of the book enhances the pediatric rapport and discernment. Sally Provence wrote that, "enabling the young child to learn, and supporting the development of competence, are important components of the psychotherapeutic

One of the biggest challenges faced by our REACH OUT AND READ Program was finding good quality multicultural children's books for our clinic families, especially culturally appropriate books at the infant/toddler level. We found that the majority of picture books and photo books available rarely featured children of color. Most often they were not represented at all or seen in just one picture in an entire book.

As a result of our search, we have discovered several books that we consider exceptional for all children and families. Special recognition goes to Checkerboard Press, a publishing company that has provided REACH OUT AND READ with a variety of high quality culturally diverse children's books at a substantial discount. The following is a listing of our recommended children's books from Checkerboard Press, along with some other selected titles and publishers who offer discounts.

Checkerboard Press
3130 Mt. Pleasant St.
Racine, WI 53404
(414) 639-8182

Little Babies—Photographs of babies from different ethnic groups doing familiar things. Infants and toddlers are especially fascinated by this book.

Me and My Mom—Celebrates the special relationship between young children and their moms through multiethnic photographs. This is a small board book for infants and toddlers. *Me and My Dad* also available.

I Can Do It—A chunky board book perfect for toddlers with photographs of children mastering lots of toddler "tasks".

Children's Press
5440 North Cumberland Ave.
Chicago, IL 06056

Messy Bessy—A young African American girl with a very messy room decides to clean. An all time favorite. Other books in this series are: *Listen to Me, Sometimes Things Change,* and *Joshua James Likes Trucks.* These books have a beginning reading format accessible to parents with limited literacy skills and are available in Spanish. For preschool and young school age.

Henry Holt and Company, Inc.
4375 West 1980 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Idalia's Project ABC—An alphabet book set in the "projects" with both English and Spanish text. Other popular books from the same press: *Here are My Hands,* and the *Everett Anderson* series. Great for preschool and school age.

treatment of all infants and young children."[4] The same might be said of pediatric care.

Pediatricians will not be able to achieve this goal without the active support of early childhood educators and developmentalists. It will be many years before literacy development makes its way into the medical school curriculum, or even into pediatric residency training. Pediatricians have the skill and the opportunity to empower parents to support the early foundations of literacy. Other professionals who better understand literacy development and its importance in the lives of children need to work with pediatricians to discover practical ways to incorporate these insights into the pediatric setting.

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Stories for the Shelter: Introducing Books for Very Young Children to Parents and Staff

by

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How can parents with limited literacy skills learn to use books with their young children? Would parents living in poverty be more interested in children's books if the books reflected their own experience of the world? Do such books exist? If so, where can they be found? What will motivate staff who work with these families to help parents make use of children's books?

These are a few of the questions that led Philadelphia Parenting Associates (PPA), a non-profit organization that provides education, training and consultation services for those working with parents of young children, to develop a comprehensive approach to encourage parents living in shelters for the homeless to use books with their young children. This article describes our project and the process we used to address our initial questions, and the additional issues that emerged from the work.

As PPA began in 1986 to provide family support and education workshops to parents living in shelters, it seemed natural to us to include discussion of children's books. Children's books are a valuable resource for many parents. They help a busy child to settle down. They present topics such as separation, anger, and sexual development on a child's level. They provide opportunities for parent and child to snuggle and to laugh together. And they affirm that fantasies and fears are all part of the unique experience of childhood.

To the parents we met in shelters, however, using books with very young children did not necessarily "come naturally." Parents said with great feeling that they wanted their children to learn to read "when they got to school," but few parents realized that using books with their infants and toddlers would help them achieve this goal. Many parents said they would not use books with their young children "because the children didn't know how to read." Some worried that their children would destroy books. A few parents, examining books designed for infants and toddlers, insisted that they were better suited for "... a child who is in school ... about 10 or 11 years old." And several parents said that they had neither the time nor the patience to sit and read with their children. Further discussions revealed that many of the parents in shelters had limited literacy skills. Few could remember having been read to when they were children.

These experiences led PPA to design a three-part comprehensive approach toward encouraging parents in shelters to use books with their young children. PPA would:

- select, purchase and donate a lending library of books to four shelters;
- design and facilitate training sessions for staff in each shelter on ways to use the books with parents; and
- facilitate workshops with parents and provide parents with appropriate books to keep.

A local church provided $2,000 for this project, $1200 for books and $800 for training. PPA staff identified four programs to participate in the project and receive the libraries: one shelter for homeless families, one "bridge housing" program for women who have been abused, and two residential drug treatment facilities. The Program Committee of PPA's Board of Directors assumed responsibility for the selection and purchase of the children's books themselves.

Selecting and purchasing appropriate books

Establishing criteria for the books to be purchased was not easy. Should the books be primarily "issue-oriented," "imaginative," or "educational"? The committee agreed that half of the books would deal with issues such as toilet training, the birth of a new sibling, separation, and death. The other half would encourage fantasy and basic literacy skills. Even though the children in the four participating programs ranged from birth to five years, the committee decided that the majority of the books purchased should be suitable for use with infants and toddlers—with brief text or none at all; clear, simple print; and basic language. The committee wanted to encourage parents with limited literacy skills to use the books, as well as to increase their awareness that books like these exist. A final criterion for book selection involved the reflection of a variety of cultures and lifestyles. Families in the shelters where the books were to be distributed were primarily African-American. Many books that reflect a white, middle-class lifestyle and/or conspicuous consumption would simply not be appropriate.

Sharon Glickman-Kind, a committee member who is an early childhood specialist and who had developed a story hour program at a shelter, volunteered to purchase the books. She quickly discovered that typical retail bookstores did not carry what PPA needed. Publishers' catalogues offered many possible choices, but they did not give her sufficient information to judge titles according to the committee's criteria. Too often, she reported, "I was so excited to find a book with a person of color. ... then, upon examination of the book, I found that the child lived in a large house with a mother, a father, a dog, a car ... or the family would be shown eating in a very expensive-looking restaurant."

Glickman-Kind sought assistance from directors of child care centers and children's museums, who shared favorite titles with her. Finally, she traveled to New York City, where she found a wealth of appropriate books at the bookstores of the Bank Street College of Education and Columbia University Teachers' College. Eventually, she bought 333 books, representing approximately 90 titles.

A collection of "issue-oriented" books and a few "fun" books was assembled for each of the four participating programs, to serve as the initial lending library. The remaining books were set aside for distribution among the parents. For each of the four programs, PPA staff

scheduled a training seminar for staff and a workshop for parents.

Training staff

The training sessions for staff had two objectives:

- to share information about the value of using books with young children; and
- to identify techniques for encouraging parents to use the books PPA had purchased.

Interestingly, shelter staff members, as a group, could name most of the ways in which books can be helpful to parents and children, but many staff had neither been read to as a child nor had read to their own children. Very few were aware initially of specific reading readiness skills; they found the simple, yet essential principles brought out in the training sessions fascinating. Staff members raised many of the same objections to reading to very young children that we had heard earlier from parents in the shelters. For example, one staff member protested strongly against *The Tenth Good Thing about Barney* by Judith Viorst, insisting that death was not an appropriate topic for a young child. The group challenged this objection, and others. With discussion, attitudes began to change.

In the end, the books themselves proved the most powerful element of the staff training. *Willy the Wimp* by Anthony Brown, *Leo, the Late Bloomer,* by Robert Kraus and Jose Aruego, *Hello, School,* by Adler, and every book by Ezra Jack Keats elicited many ideas from staff about working with parents to use these books. Staff members in several shelters decided to begin a story hour with parents and children using books, such as *Jambo Means Hello,* by Muriel Feelings and Tom Feelings and *I Am Eyes - Ni Macho,* by Leila Ward and Nanny Hogrogian that build a sense of pride in African-American heritage.

Working with parents

The enthusiasm of the parents in the four shelters matched the (acquired) enthusiasm of the staff. Initially, parents were most attracted to educational alphabet and counting books, and to fairy tales. As they explored the broader, less familiar range of books offered, their interest in these increased. Parents with infants and toddlers were attracted to the cardboard books with illustrations of babies eating, playing and sleeping. They began immediately to see how they could use a book about sounds to engage their very young children. Parents welcomed the information available in the books about the dentist, the doctor, children's bodies, and disabilities. Almost all of the parents wanted to share the books about Africa with their children.

While parents still expressed many concerns about getting their children to "sit still" and not "tear up the book," once books were actually available to them, they did not demonstrate the resistance to using books with children that PPA's earliest discussions had led staff to anticipate. Parents said they never knew that books "like these" were available and wanted to know where they could find them outside the shelter. The most difficult part of the work with parents was having to limit to two the books they could take and keep for their families.

Conclusions

The experience of this project has resolved many of PPA's initial questions. It has shown that parents with limited literacy skills can learn through small group experiences to use books with their very young children. It has demonstrated that parents living in difficult circumstances welcome children's books that reflect a view of their everyday world and their cultural heritage. The project has also confirmed the need to work with staff of programs for highly stressed families—first, to raise their awareness of the value of books for very young children and families, and second, to develop their skill in using children's books in their work with parents.

For additional reading

Brooks, B. (1990) *Beyond the Berenstein Bears.* Young Child, November p. 65

Farhi, P. and Kehayias-Farhi, L. (1990) *The New Children's Books: Grimmer Than Grim.* Young Children, November. p. 64

Mavrogenes, N. (1990) *Helping Parents Help Their Children Become Literate.* Young Children, May pp. 4-9

Rousso, J. and Gross, A. (1988) *Talking With Young Children About Their Dreams: How to Listen and What to Listen For.* Young Children, July pp. 70-74

Selected resources for special interest books for children

Bookfinder: Guide to Children's Literature 2 to 16 Years

Young Children—a monthly journal of NAEYC; has reviews of new and special interest books for children 0-5 years.

Bank Street College of Education Bookstore, 610 W. 112th Street, New York, NY (212) 222-6700. An extensive selection of titles, categorized by topics, is available.

Columbia Teacher's College Bookstore, 1224 Amsterdam Ave., NY, NY (212) 678-3920.

Gryphon House, P.O. Box 275, Mt. Rainier, MD 20712 (800) 638-0928. Publishes a catalogue of early childhood books.

Directors of children's museums and child care programs

Local Associations for the Education of Young Children

Publishers

Aladdin Books, 866 Third Avenue, NY, NY (212) 702-2000

Checkerboard Press, 30 Vesey St., NY, NY (212) 571-6300

Dial Books for Young Readers, 375 Hudson St., NY, NY (212) 366-2800.

*The complete list of project selections (including title, author, and publisher) is available for $3 from Philadelphia Parenting Associates, 7708 City Line Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19151.

Parents as Teachers: Nurturing Literacy in the Very Young

by

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"Beginning at the beginning" is the hallmark of the Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, a home-school partnership that begins at a child's birth and helps parents give their child the best possible start in life. Begun in Missouri and replicated in 36 other states and Australia, the Parents as Teachers program is based on the philosophy that parents are a child's first and most influential teachers, and that the school's role in the early years is to assist families in giving their children a solid educational foundation. The Parents as Teachers program is proving to be an ideal means for promoting emergent literacy while acknowledging the learning environment of the home and building on each family's strengths.

Parents as Teachers offers families a variety of services during the first three years of a child's life. These include:

- Personalized home visits by trained and certified parent educators, who offer timely information on child development and practical ways to foster learning and deal with difficult situations;
- Group meetings where parents can share experiences, common concerns, frustrations and successes;
- Ongoing monitoring and periodic screening to detect possible developmental delays or handicapping conditions before age 3; and
- A referral network that helps parents make connections with any needed special services that are beyond the scope of the PAT program.

Encouraging literacy

An emphasis on the child's language development permeates the Parents as Teachers program. PAT shows parents, from their first interactions with their newborns, the importance of responding to the child's vocalizations and how to capture the teachable moments in everyday living to enhance language development. Parents are encouraged to be attentive listeners and appropriate questioners as they learn to engage their young child in conversations about what is happening around them. Parent educators stress the significant relationship between hearing and language development, so that parents will take advantage of PAT's hearing screening and consult a physician promptly about ear infections.

Involving babies with books from infancy on and helping children develop a love of stories is a part of every PAT program. Parent educators are well aware of research findings that emphasize the value of reading to the child regularly during the preschool years, having people in the home stimulate the child's interest in reading and writing, and having a variety of printed materials, paper, and pencils available in the home (Durkin, 1966; Goodman,1986; Harste, Woodward, & Burk, 1984; Snow & Ninio, 1986; Teale, 1986). They also appreciate the importance of the "emotionally satisfying literacy event" (Goodman, 1984, p. 105). For example, one parent educator describes taking a two-year-old onto her lap during a home visit and beginning to read a story. The little boy looked up into her face as she turned the page, then looked at his mom and exclaimed, "She loves me!"

Parent-child activities that encourage literacy

PAT's parent educators routinely use developmentally appropriate books during home visits to show parents the kinds of books the child will enjoy at each age and to model their use with the child. Parents of newborns, for example, are encouraged to read nursery rhymes to their babies so they can enjoy the rhythm of the language while being held close. Parents are also asked to place the infant on his stomach regularly each day with an open book propped in front of him—something interesting to see as he practices raising his head. As the baby grows, the parent learns to expect her to mouth vinyl and cardboard books as she explores her environment. As manipulation gives way to a greater interest in the content of books, parents are shown how to choose books with bright, simple pictures with few words; they are encouraged to store books always within the child's reach. Parent educators model expressive reading of simple stories for older toddlers, with gradual movement toward longer, yet always appropriate, books. Parents are encouraged to give in to "book binges," accommodating the child who wants to hear the same book over and over and over again.

Many PAT programs make appropriate books available to parents through lending libraries or Reading is Fundamental (RIF) gifts. Parent-child group meetings regularly include storytimes for two year-olds; sometimes these are "bedtime storytimes," when children come in pajamas and bring their teddy bears. Parents are encouraged to use community libraries; some school districts allow PAT parents to borrow books from elementary school libraries—a meaningful effort to bring young families to school early, as well as to promote literacy.

Extending literacy experiences in disadvantaged families

From January through May, 1988, PAT parent educators undertook a naturalistic study in which low-income, low-literate parents were encouraged to share children's books with their infants and toddlers and parents' responses to the books were observed (Geismar-Ryan, Rouse, & Frink, 1989). The naturalistic inquiry approach was chosen because it facilitated observation and allowed the parent educators to fit into, rather than disrupt, the patterns of family life (Teale, 1986). Seven low-income families who had enrolled in the PAT program in the Ferguson-Florissant School

District in St. Louis County were the subjects for the study. None of the parents had graduated from high school. Ten children, ranging in ages from two and one-half months to three years were involved.

In order to measure the availability or lack of literacy related activities and materials in the homes, parent educators developed the Parents as Teachers Literacy Environment Checklist (Geismar-Ryan, Rouse, & Frink, 1988—Figure 1), adapted from Teale's Literacy Environment Checklist (1987). In the course of the parent educators' initial visits to the homes of the seven study families, they observed few or none of the checklist materials and activities.

During the hour-long monthly home visits with each family that are the core of the PAT program, parent educators incorporated four specific literacy activities into the typical home visit procedures:

1. Giving the families appropriate children's books to keep and modeling their use

The parent educator gave each child in each study family a developmentally appropriate book at each visit. Mothers were taught what kinds of books their children might like and how infants and toddlers might handle and react to books. Parent educators modeled how to read the gift books aloud in a way that would hold the child's interest, and observed and discussed with the parent what the child did.

2. Making books

Homemade books were constructed from zip-lock plastic bags, filled with Polaroid pictures of the child taken during the home visit and with magazine pictures, all glued onto colored paper. Simple captions were written under each picture. Parents were encouraged to change the pictures periodically.

3. Writing baby biographies

To create baby biographies, the mother dictated to the parent educator short descriptive sentences about the child's development. The parent educator recorded the mother's exact words, reinforcing the importance of the parent's own words and observations about her own child. The parent educator gave the original dictation to the parent immediately, to keep in a folder provided by PAT, and kept a copy for herself. These stories became the parent's personalized child development materials, a source of pride and interest for the whole family. The process of creating baby biographies helped parents talk more freely to the parent educator about the child and provided a natural focus on the child's developmental achievements—because these "good things" the child did were typically what mothers wished to have saved in the biographies.

4. Using tape-recorded readings of nursery rhymes that matched a gift book

In order to encourage enjoyment of nursery rhymes, parent educators recorded nursery rhymes on an audio cassette tape, cued to match the pages of a cardboard nursery rhyme book. Nursery rhymes set to music were

Figure 1. **PARENTS AS TEACHERS LITERACY ENVIRONMENT CHECKLIST**

Literacy Materials Observed	Dates Observed		
1. Adult books	____	____	____
Approximate number	____	____	____
Type of book(s)	____	____	____
2. Newspapers and/or magazines	____	____	____
3. Age-appropriate children's books	____	____	____
Approximate number	____	____	____
Type of book(s)	____	____	____
4. Child's books within reach	____	____	____
5. Adult writing implements (crayons, markers, etc.)	____	____	____
6. Children's writing implements (crayons, markers, etc.)	____	____	____
7. Writing paper	____	____	____
8. Written notes	____	____	____
9. Current calendar	____	____	____
10. Printed materials magneted to refrigerator	____	____	____
Parent Comments About ...			
1. Books, magazines, newspaper	____	____	____
2. Calendar	____	____	____
3. Bulletin board	____	____	____
4. Book or story child likes	____	____	____
5. Reading to child	____	____	____
6. Writing, drawing, or scribbling with child	____	____	____
7. Reading or writing in relation to shopping, school, family communication or other functional activities	____	____	____
8. Interest in or use of library	____	____	____

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included on the reverse side of the tape. In the course of one home visit, the parent educator would give the family the book and lend them the audiotape and a child's tape recorder for a month. If families had their own tape recorders, they could keep the tapes.

Observations from the study

Giving families appropriate books for their very young children to keep helped parents to use books with their babies for the first time and to enjoy books in ways that were new for them. Before they became involved with Parents as Teachers, most of the mothers in the study families had thought that their babies were too young for books. Three mothers had experimented with books, but because they had chosen books that were not appropriate for the child's age, their experiences had been less than satisfying. Debbie commented, "Roger had books with paper pages, but I put them away because all he did was eat them. I didn't know they had things like these hard (board) books." Tess reported, "I think the mistake I was making was getting Evan books with too many words. You showed me what kinds of books he likes—good pictures and not so many words."

During home visits, parent educators observed children manipulating the books, sitting still and looking at the pictures, listening to stories or poems, imitating animal sounds, and talking about the books. When mothers mistakenly thought the books were on loan, they kept them on a high shelf so that they could be returned in good condition. As the study progressed, however, parents showed increasing willingness to incorporate literacy experiences into their parenting practices. Four families kept their new books with the child's toys, within the child's reach, and these books appeared well-used.

Parent educators' home visit reports documented parents' responses to the gift books. Davita stated, "At

About Parents as Teachers

In an effort to help parents give their children the best possible start in life, Missouri became the first state in the nation to mandate all school districts to provide parent education and support services to families beginning at the child's birth. Following a successful three-year pilot project in four school districts, the Parents as Teachers program was initiated statewide (543 districts) in 1985. The program now has been replicated in 36 other states and Australia.

The Parents as Teachers program acknowledges parents as the specialists on their own children and regards professional parent educators as generalists who have research-based information on child development to share with families. Parent educators build a strong relationship with families over a period of three years, and are trained to support continually the importance of the parents' role and to respect each family's values and expectations for the child.

To help parents better understand their child's development, the PAT curriculum focuses on four areas: language, cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development. Parent educators model meaningful learning activities with the child and discuss concepts and practices with the parents. They support the parents' efforts to become more astute observers of their child so that they are more fully aware of what the child is ready to do.

Three independent evaluations conducted by Research and Training Associates, Overland Park, Kansas have confirmed the benefits of PAT (Pfannenstiel, Lambson, & Yarnell, 1991).

- At the conclusion of the pilot project, New Parents as Teachers (NPAT) children at age three were significantly more advanced than comparison group children in language, social development, and problem-solving—competencies that are essential to later school success. NPAT parents were more knowledgeable about child development and child rearing practices and viewed the school district more positively than parents in the comparison group.

- A 1989 follow-up study of these children found that at the end of first grade, NPAT children scored significantly higher than the comparison group on standardized reading and math tests and were rated higher in school performance by their teachers. Significantly more NPAT parents initiated requests for parent-teacher conferences; NPAT parents were twice as likely as parents in the comparison group to be involved in their children's school experiences.

- The Second Wave study looked at a broad range of families in the statewide Parents as Teachers program. Findings, released in July, 1991, showed that at age three, children in Parents as Teachers on the average scored significantly above the national norms on measures of school-related achievement—despite the fact that the PAT sample participants were overrepresented on traditional characteristics of risk (poverty, one-parent families, mothers with less than a high school education, and minority status.) In addition, more than half of the children with observed developmental delays, as determined by periodic screening, overcame them by age three. Parents in all types of families were enthusiastic, active program participants, and became significantly more knowledgeable about child development and child rearing practices than they had been before participating in PAT.

For more information about Parents as Teachers, contact: Parents as Teachers National Center, Marillac Hall, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 8001 Natural Bridge Road, St. Louis, MO 63121, tel: (314) 553-5738

first Hally only chewed on the books. Now she's looking at the pictures and tries to turn the pages." Debbie said, "When I put the farm book out with two other books and made animal sounds, Roger picked up the farm book. I was surprised!" Debbie later reported that when Roger was in the intensive care unit of the hospital, the family played the program's tape recording of nursery rhymes over and over for him; she thought this helped him feel better.

Tess related that both her children enjoyed the books. "Evan loves the book you gave him. I read it over and over to him. His daddy reads it to him. And when nobody'll read it to him, he just reads it himself—oh, just the pictures, but he knows every animal! He likes Tory's book, too. Tory likes it because she can put it in her mouth." Evan responded well to the nursery rhyme tape as well as the books. The parent educator reported, "When I arrived at the home for our next visit, Evan met me at the screen door, grinning ear to ear, saying, 'Jack be nimble, Jack be quick!' So of course I answered, 'Jack, jump over the candlestick,' and we both had a good laugh. It had been wonderful to share that poem and Evan's pride."

Benefits of the book program extended beyond PAT children to older siblings and other babies that came into the home. Dolly stated, "Kelly likes the books, and my older kids like them." Linette grinned as she commented, "All the babies I take care of play with the books!" Some mothers in the study did more with books on their own. One bought a thick-paged vinyl book herself and indicated an interest in getting a library card. Two mothers bought more board books for their children, and two others joined book clubs for their older children. On the last visit of the project, Evan's father had two of his children on his lap reading a free book they had gotten from a book club; Evan had the repetitious parts memorized.

All of the parents in the seven study families said they liked Parents as Teachers and enrolled in the program the following year. The interest and enthusiasm they expressed was in sharp contrast to their cautious, quiet entry into the program.

Adaptations

Many of the parent-child activities used in the PAT program can be implemented in most school districts. A congratulatory message from the school to the family on the birth of a child would be a modest beginning, communicating the school's interest in the child's development from early on. A visit by a staff member or trained volunteer to deliver information and ideas on learning in the home would be an effective follow-up. Storytimes for two-year olds could be offered by the school librarian or an interested PTA member. Local school book fairs and Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) offerings could include books for the very young and reach out to invite new families. A corner of the school library could be allocated to parents of young children, with information on parenting and books for reading aloud. Community libraries could be encouraged to make vinyl books available for lending.

Parents as Teachers is demonstrating that schools can make a significant difference in children's learning from the very beginning by assisting parents in their role as the child's first and most important teachers. An investment in this beginning can yield rich dividends in children's success in school and in life.

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Family Literacy: Serving Undereducated Families

by

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Family literacy programs are an attempt to break the cycle of illiteracy and poverty by addressing the needs of both the adults and the children within the context of the family unit. The home is where messages, values, customs, patterns, culture, and skills are learned and practiced. Families are cultural contexts in which a variety of "literacies" already exist, even though "school literacy" may be underdeveloped. A family literacy program can be described as an "educative community" in which both parents and children become teachers and learners; adults acquire skills by helping their children learn.

Family literacy programs typically seek to do one or more of the following:

- increase literacy skills of adults and children;
- influence parent-child relationships;
- help family members develop positive attitudes about reading and writing; and
- influence how families view literacy as part of daily life activities.

A recent study (Nickse, 1989) found 300 programs that identified themselves as family literacy programs. Program models vary in their basic goals (Weinstein-Shr,1990), underlying assumptions (Auerbach, 1989), and type of intervention (Nickse,1989).

In response to the demand for information and with a vision of leadership in the relatively new field of family literacy, the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) was established in July, 1989. Located in Louisville, Kentucky and supported by a grant from the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust, this private non profit corporation aims to break the cycle of undereducation by assisting the establishment of family literacy programs throughout the country. The Center's leaders are skilled in both education and family intervention techniques. The Center endeavors to:

- provide training and technical assistance to enable the establishment of quality family literacy programs throughout the nation;
- provide assistance and information to federal, state and local policymakers and program planners, thus encouraging a national understanding and response to the cyclical problem of illiteracy;
- support the expansion of existing and developing family literacy efforts nationwide through training, materials development, newsletters, and an information clearinghouse; and
- fund model programs and conduct research to ensure that practice informs research and that research improves the quality of family literacy efforts.

The Kenan Trust Family Literacy Model

The Kenan Trust Family Literacy program model was developed to serve primary caregivers and their three- or four-year-old children, but is being adapted to serve families with infants and toddlers as well. The original Kenan model was implemented in seven sites in North Carolina and Louisville, Kentucky beginning in the fall of 1988. A follow-up study of 79 children who participated in the programs from 1988-1990 suggests a substantial positive impact on variables related to school success (National Center for Family Literacy Research and Evaluation, 1991).

In the Kenan model, parents (or grandparents or other caregivers) and children attend school together three days a week. In the mornings, parents work on basic academic skills and parenting skills in an adult education class. Children attend a preschool program that uses the High/Scope Preschool Curriculum. Parents and children eat lunch together. During the afternoon, parents and children participate together in activities that give parents the opportunity to practice newly learned parenting skills and children the chance to demonstrate the skills they have learned in the preschool classroom. A typical day in a Kenan Model program might look like this:

The program day begins with the arrival of a school bus bringing parents and children to school. After breakfast together in the cafeteria, parents and children go to separate but neighboring classrooms.

Under the supervision of an adult education teacher, parents work for three hours on basic academic skills reading, math, and oral and written communication—all with an emphasis on critical thinking and cooperative learning. Because skills and abilities among parents vary widely, much of the academic instruction is individualized. The curriculum also emphasizes interactive learning: Teachers facilitate group discussion, peer interaction, and small group problem solving sessions. Parents also have an opportunity to explore career options and job opportunities, practice goal setting, and master the techniques involved in writing resumes and interviewing.

During the same three-hour period, children are developing their pre-literacy skills—oral communication with peers and adults, social interaction, and language development—guided by an early childhood teaching team trained to deliver an adaptation of the High/Scope Preschool Curriculum.

Next, parents join children in their classroom for a 45-minute to one-hour period called "Parents and Children Together" (PACT). Before their parents arrive in their classroom, the children decide what they want to do. Sometimes they "send a message" to their parent by drawing signs of the activity areas or "scribble writing" (interpreted by the teacher);

sometimes they wait for their parents at the classroom door. During the PACT period, children are the leaders, initiating projects in which their parents can join. Children may select a book for their parent to read to them or plan an activity, such as drawing at the easel or putting a puzzle together. During the last 15 minutes of the PACT period, the teacher leads an activity that parents and children might enjoy at home, such as story telling or making musical instruments out of household objects. These activities are designed to teach parents ways to teach and guide their children during play.

Lunch follows, for parents and children together. While children nap after lunch, parents meet with staff for a 45-minute session designed to enhance parenting skills. This session gives parents a chance to discuss issues such as discipline, nutrition, cleanliness, or domestic conflict. Guest speakers may also be scheduled.

During the final period of the day, children play outdoors and parents work as volunteers in the school, tutoring elementary school children or working in the school library or office. This part of the day not only provides parents with some job training but also helps them begin to feel comfortable in the school setting, communicating with schooi staff.

Parents and children follow this routine three days a week from September through May. At the end of the school year, both parents and children receive diplomas in a graduation ceremony.

The National Center for Family Literacy has trained 1500 program staff and coordinators from 42 states in the Kenan model. More than half of the teachers trained are now implementing the model in family literacy programs across the country. Since the fall of 1989, the NCFL has also provided technical assistance to several other family literacy program models, including the federally funded Even Start programs. These federal programs link early childhood education to adult education to help disadvantaged parents strengthen their own skills as they, in turn, support their children's emerging abilities. In 1990 NCFL began offering technical assistance to 11 grantees of The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy.

Family literacy programs that include infants and toddlers

Work with Even Start has allowed NCFL to examine adaptations of the Kenan model. For example, program developers have identified a need to provide care for the infants and toddlers of families enrolled in family literacy efforts. They have recognized, moreover, that parents of infants and toddlers have both a need and a unique opportunity to support their children's learning from the first days of life. Even Start models have incorporated children from one to three years of age into their programs in several ways:

- At the **Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) Even Start project,** Director Wilma Harry has included toddlers in both home visits and center-based activities. Staff members help parents to recognize that children learn "even though they are just playing" and that school readiness involves using muscles, developing and recognizing patterns, and listening and responding to stories—not just learning ABCs and 123s. All toddlers' attempts at speaking, listening, "reading," writing, and thinking are appreciated. Parents are taught "active reading" and ways to use household items in learning games.

- The **Salem, Oregon Even Start Family Literacy Program** incorporates infants and toddlers in Parent Time discussions and "homework." Coordinator Lillis Larson Kent finds the newsletters Growing Child and Growing Parent (Dunn and Hargett, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana) appreciated by parents, who are given their own copies of the newsletter.

Recognizing that Native Americans and Hawaiians place a strong emphasis on the entire family as a unit, family literacy projects serving these populations have chosen to include all children in participating families in their center-based programs:

- The **Bureau of Indian Affairs'** family literacy project, begun in April, 1991, has responded to parents' wishes to include all their children in activities by creating a center-based toddler classroom in a program similar to the Kenan model described above. During Parents and Children Together (PACT) time, parents with toddlers include both toddlers and preschoolers in whatever activities they devise. Project sites are in South Dakota, New Mexico, Washington, and Minnesota.

- The **Nanaikapono Head Start Ohana Literacy Center,** a Barbara Bush Family Literacy Foundation grantee, recognized from the outset that Hawaiians take their strength from the family and welcomed all children into the project from the beginning. From the beginning of project planning, coordinator Christine Jackson included caregivers for infants and toddlers in the staffing pattern. PACT time is scheduled for the beginning of the day, when all children can be involved with their parents.

A family literacy approach can even begin prenatally:

- The **Florida Outreach Childbirth Education** project recognizes, in the words of Project Director Dee Jeffers, that "pregnant parents are a captive audience. They are really interested in providing the best environment for their children." Begun in 1988, the project attempts to remedy the lack of education for pregnant women with poor reading skills. It provides comprehensive prenatal and parenting classes to low-income, low-literacy families in a school setting that promotes reading and educational opportunities. Jeffers describes the project as a bridge from home to school for parents and hopes that "if this educational experience is positive, parents will want more. They begin to realize that

NANAIKAPONO HEAD START OHANA LITERACY CENTER

parenting is more than keeping children clean, healthy and safe. It also means teaching their children about life."

Conclusion

The love of learning is transferred from one generation to the next. When adults have not had opportunities to develop literacy skills, family literacy programs can offer them new opportunities to develop their own capacities in order to support their children. A high quality family literacy program model should be an intergenerational one, built on the strengths of families and team members. Family literacy programs should include adult education, early childhood education, vocational education and parental support.

Family literacy programs can help parents to develop hope for themselves, to feel empowered, to feel strong, and to feel worthy—to dream for themselves and their children, and to fulfill those dreams.

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For information about programs mentioned in this article, contact:

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National Center for Family Literacy
Louisville, Kentucky
(502) 584-1133

Wilma Harry
Cold Springs School
Indianapolis, Indiana
(317) 226-3275

Lillis Larson-Kent
Salem-Keizer Public Schools
Salem, Oregon
(503) 399-3074

Coalition of Florida Childbirth Educators
P.O. Box 290583
Tampa, Florida 33687

Dee Jeffers or Patty Jones
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Washington, D.C.
(202) 219-1127

Christine Jackson
Honolulu Community Action Program, Inc.
Honolulu, Hawaii
(808) 521-4531

National Center Notes

by Eleanor S. Szanton

The Hippocratic oath, "First do no harm," comes to mind these days in light of one recent piece of federal policy. This is the proposed set of regulations drafted to implement Title IV-A At-Risk Child Care. They will govern the new At Risk funds available to states to subsidize child care for families whose income is so low that, without subsidy, they are "at risk" of having to go on AFDC. The present funding level is $300 million. Furthermore, the section on "applicable standards" is proposed to govern the implementation of *all* funds expended for child care under Title IV A of the Social Security Act, including the Family Support Act (welfare reform), a major entitlement program. (These are not the regulations drafted to govern the Child Care and Development Block Grant, which was enacted in the waning days of the 100th Congress and is presently funded at $732 million.)

Ideally, states would use these Title IV-A funds to set up "Head Start"-like comprehensive child development programs to improve the odds for the children served. However, the newly proposed federal regulations not only have the effect of strongly discouraging such a move, they permit states to fund non-licensed child care and *forbid* states to require non-licensed child care to meet certain minimal health and safety standards as a condition for this federal funding.

To better understand what is at stake, it is important to look at the Child Care and Development Block grant regulations for comparison: In line with the legislation it implements, the interim final rule for the CCDBG regulations lays out some very important principles for states to follow. First, states must have basic health and safety regulations in place, applicable to *all* child care providers, *including family day care providers,* with the single exception of close relatives. Second, states are required to set a substantial sum aside to address issues of *quality improvement,* defined in the regulations as (1) grants and loans to help child care providers bring their facilities up to present state standards; (2) improving states' regulations; (3) increasing the ability to monitor child care facilities; (4) increasing opportunities for training; (5) increasing salaries of child care providers; and (6) developing a network of resource and referral agencies. Third, states are asked to develop their child care funding plans so as to create a "seamless web of services" with other child care and social service funding streams. And fourth, these regulations require reimbursement for child care services "at the market rate." The net effect of this funding—some of it direct to child care centers, most in the form of vouchers for parents to use where they want—would be to bring much more family day care out from underground. Families of infants and toddlers, who by and large have chosen family day care, will, with their vouchers, provide an incentive for family day care providers to come forward, be registered, and be subject to at least a few basic health and safety regulations. States could then provide these homes with information and technical assistance. They must provide them with at least some health and safety-related training opportunities, and ensure that homes take basic measures to ensure safety and infectious disease control, including assuring age-appropriate immunizations. States might go further and enact more comprehensive reforms, setting up an available health network for child care providers to plug into, keeping track of primary health care received by the children as well as screening for physical, developmental, or mental health problems (as long as these reforms do not limit "parental choice.")

In contrast, the draft At Risk regulations require that funds utilized for families struggling to get off or stay off of AFDC *may not be used for quality improvement and may not require health and safety practices of currently unregulated providers.* The language of the proposed regulations states that registration cannot be used as a way of ensuring that informal caregivers receiving these funds meet even the most minimal health and safety standards, *even if states have previously linked registration to health and safety requirements.* The proposed regulations limit reimbursement of providers to no more than "75 percent of market rate," thus forcing low income parents into substandard care and depressing the income of an already hopelessly underpaid set of providers.

Thus states wishing to create both the "seamless web of services" called for in the CCDBG legislation as well as some innovative quality standards for young children in care will be forced to choose one or the other. One result will be that, unless a state rolls back its other standards, individual parents who qualify financially first for the Title IV-A and then the block grant funds may have to change child care providers in order to remain eligible for funding. This, of course, controverts the practice, so essential to infants and toddlers, of continuity of care. Another result will be to create an increasingly two-tiered system of child care, one for the "have's," the other for the "have nots."

It is hard to understand what principles underlie these regulations—certainly not the principle that by the Year 2000 all children should arrive in school healthy and ready to learn. In fact these regulations do not even follow the time-honored principle of allowing states to set their own funding requirements for child care within their borders.

The comment period for the Title IV-A "At-risk" regulations will have closed by the time these words are read. Possibly the comments of NCCIP and other (national) organizations which follow child care issues will have helped to alter somewhat the final rule. Nevertheless, states will need all the help they can get from knowledgeable professionals and advocates as to how to apply these new measures, trying first to "do no harm".

Another important role for the federal government with relation to child care is as a clearinghouse for best practices among states. NCCIP's Better Care for the Babies project recently convened a technical assistance forum, "Finding and Funding Quality Child Care and Head Start Services for Infants and Toddlers." The meeting

was attended by some 300 people, including state agency admininstrators from 45 states and the District of Columbia. On the final day of the conference, the group passed a resolution calling on the federal goverenment "to provide more leadership to assure high quality child care services for infants, toddlers and their families in the United States." To this end, it called on the government to "create a clearinghouse and a technical assistance capability to provide leadership in the development of quality services, including the dissemination of model training and standards initiatives, staff compensation and career development approaches, monitoring and service integration strategies, and new knowledge about research and best practice." The conference participants noted the long tradition of substantial federal leadership in other areas of human services, such as early intervention for children with special needs.

Publications:

Early Literacy (1990)—Joan Brooks McLane and Gillian Dowley McNamee (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138) $17.95, cloth; $7.95, paper.

The development of literacy, note McLane and Dowley, consists of mastering "a complex set of attitudes, expectations, feelings, behaviors, and skills related to written language." The development of literacy does not just happen, but is described as a profoundly social process that begins in children's relationships with their immediate caretakers, and is expressed and elaborated in increasingly wider communities. Activities such as pretend play, drawing, and being read to can nurture and influence children's understanding of "what the system of written language is all about."

Parents, family members, and others introduce young children to literacy by serving as models of literate behavior, by participating in reading and writing with children, by encouraging play and fantasy, and by reading aloud. Observations of professional, inner-city, and Asian refugee families suggest that more important than access to books and writing implements themselves is how such materials are used by adults, how they are made available to children, and what messages about their use and importance are communicated.

Talking from Infancy: How to Nurture and Cultivate Early Language Development (1990) - William Fowler (Brookline Books, P.O. Box 1046, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02238-1046) $15.95 (Videotape, $29.95; book and videotape, $39.95).

The language enrichment activities described in this book are based on the author's research findings that: 1) An early start with an enriched environment generally has very significant positive influences on cognitive development; 2) When early enrichment is centered on language experiences, it has the strongest effects on children's verbal development; and 3) Early language stimulation also seems to exercise a strong general influence on children's verbal development. Finding that both day care teachers and parents often hold low expectations for infant language development, the author has written guidelines to help parents, child care providers and other practitioners enrich the language experience of young children. In addition to discussing general stages of language development and principles of language interaction, the volume suggests specific techniques for vocalization play, word play, sentence play, and "theme activity" (reading and narrating). The videotape demonstrates the methods discussed in the book.

Language Development from Two to Three (1991) - Lois Bloom (Cambridge University Press, 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011) $49.50.

The papers brought together in this volume, originally published between 1970 and 1989, have to do with that period before three years of age when children learn "to talk, to express what they have in mind, and to use language to influence the beliefs and actions of themselves and other persons." These studies originate in the developmental tradition, which assumes that children play an active part in acquiring language, attending to what they hear in contexts they can recognize and understand. (This differs from the perspective of "learnability research," which emphasizes the importance of inborn, specifically linguistic constraints on language acquisition.) The specific themes of research and theory addressed in this volume include: meaning, context, and cognition in child language; individual differences in language development; and the centrality of verbs.

Beyond the Parental Leave Debate: The Impact of Laws in Four States (1991) - James T. Bond, Ellen Galinsky, Michele Lord, Graham L. Staines, and Karen R. Brown (Families and Work Institute, 330 Seventh Avenue, 24th Floor, New York, NY 10001) $30.00, prepaid orders only.

This report is the result of a three-year public policy study focusing on the impact of parental leave statutes on employers and employees in four states—Minnesota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin. Data on the effect of parental leave legislation on employers address the relative ease and difficulty of implementation, the costs of implementation, the effect on health insurance benefits, and usage of temporary workers. The report examines the impact of legislation on mothers' usage of leave, length of leaves, and rate of return to original employers before and after implementation of the laws, with particular attention to lower-income parents. The study found that the most immediate effect of the passage of parental leave laws seems to be a small reduction in the proportion of women who take fewer than 6 weeks off after childbirth and a small increase in the proportion of fathers who take leaves. The study found minimal difficulty in compliance and a lack of significant costs for the majority of employers.

Sharing the Caring: How To Find the Right Child Care and Make It Work for You and Your Child (1991) - Amy Laura Dombro and Patty Bryan (Simon & Schuster/ Fireside, Simon & Schuster Building, Rockefeller Center, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020) $18.95.

"Ideally," the authors of this book suggest, "parents and caregivers form a partnership, building a bridge between home and child care, enabling children to feel safe and happy in both settings." In the real world, however, this partnership may be undermined by differences in backgrounds, insecurity in roles, lack of time to communicate, and inexperience in dealing with the "deep, raw feelings of love, tenderness, jealousy, and competition" evoked by young children in adults. *Sharing the Caring* discusses the issues involved in choosing child care, the roles and relationships of parents and caregivers, and aspects of working together, including guidelines for using observation as a tool and for resolving differences between parent and caregiver.

Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family (1990) - David Blankenhorn, Steven Bayne, and Jean Bethke Elshtain, editors (Family Service America, 11700 West Lake Park Drive, Park Place, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53224) $16.95, plus $3.00 shipping and handling.

Based on commissioned papers from a 1989 conference held at Stanford University and entitled, "What Do Families Do?", the essays in this volume attempt to describe the actual conditions of contemporary family life, analyze changing cultural values and social institutions, and outline an agenda for the future. Although the contributors represent a range of perspectives, they tend to agree that: 1) As a social institution, the family in America is increasingly less able to carry out its basic functions; 2) The quality of life for America's children is declining; and 3) Our family dilemma is not simply one of public policy or economics, but it is also one of cultural values and social institutions. Contributors to the volume include Urie Bronfenbrenner, Edward Zigler, and Sylvia Ann Hewlett, among others.

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child Birth to Age 5: The Complete and Authoritative Guide (1991) - American Academy of Pediatrics: Steven P. Shelov, editor-in-chief; Robert E. Hannemann, associate medical editor (Bantam Books, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103) $29.95.

This volume is the first in a series of three books developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Feeling Fine Programs. James Strain, Executive Director of the AAP, notes that initial material was developed by a seven-member editorial board including Catherine DeAngelis, Morris Green, Robert J. Haggerty, Andrew P. Mezey, and Jack P. Shonkoff, with the assistance of more than 75 other contributors and reviewers.

"The Gifts of Parenthood," the introduction to the volume, encourages parents to enjoy their child as an

individual, educate themselves, be a good example, show their love, communicate honestly and openly, nurture growth and change, minimize frustrations and maximize success, offer coping strategies, and recognize problems, getting help when necessary. A "Developmental Health Watch" feature for each age grouping tells parents: "Because each baby develops in his own particular manner, it's impossible to tell exactly when or how your child will perfect a given skill. The developmental milestones listed in this book will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect, but don't be alarmed if your own baby's development takes a slightly different course. Alert your pediatrician, however, if your baby displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age."

Infancy and Early Childhood: The Practice of Assessment and Intervention with Emotional and Developmental Challenges (1991) - Stanley I. Greenspan (International Universities Press, Inc. 59 Boston Post Road, P.O. Box 1524, Madison, Connecticut 06443-1524) $72.50, plus $2.75 postage and handling.

In the evaluation and treatment of infants, young children and their families, a therapist may help the child and family develop new adaptive capacities and overcome difficulties in a relatively short period of time if he or she is able to take full advantage of unique opportunities for intervention. In this 23-chapter volume, Stanley I. Greenspan presents a basic model for conceptualizing how constitutional-maturational, family-cultural, and interactive patterns influence the child's feelings, thoughts and behaviors at each of six developmental levels. In more than 20 detailed case studies, Greenspan illustrates clinical work with children in the first four and one-half years of life and their families. Cases include the range of clinical challenges from which Greenspan has constructed his approach to assessment, diagnosis and treatment, particularly his increasing attention to observing the

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infant's constitutional and maturational differences and integrating an approach to these variables in the treatment process.

Greenspan offers specific guidelines for both clinical assessment and therapy, with infants and young children and with their parents and caregivers. Greenspan's "floor time" therapeutic approach to infants and young children is described in relation to each developmental stage and to different types of children. He also offers suggestions for "parent-oriented developmental therapy" and for integrating a developmental perspective into couples and family therapy. Appendixes include an annotated listing of selected assessment instruments as well as a discussion of administrative and programmatic issues in setting up a clinical infant development program in a community.

Early Intervention Collaborative Study: Executive Summary of Findings from Phase One (March, 1990) - Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D., Penny Hauser-Cram, Ed.D., Marty Wyngaarden Krauss, Ph.D., Carole C. Upshur, Ed.D. (Division of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Department of Pediatrics, University of Massachusetts Medical Center, 55 Lake Avenue, North, Worcester, MA 01655). Single copies of the executive summary may be requested from Ms. Debra A. Roy at no charge. Copies of the complete final report of Phase One (278 pages) are available for $20.00 each, checks payable to the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

The Early Intervention Collaborative Study was established in 1985 to investigate: 1) the predictors of competence in young children with disabilities; 2) the adaptation of their families; and 3) the impact of early intervention services on children and families. Phase I of the study investigated changes in 190 children and families during their first year of participation in early intervention programs in Massachusetts or New Hampshire. Findings from Phase I address changes in children, changes in families, the services received by children and families, parent appraisals of their early intervention experience, and differences related to the types of service received.

Greater developmental gains were noted for children whose services were provided primarily on an individual basis, rather than in groups. Parents gave favorable ratings to home visits; parent groups received mixed ratings, suggesting a need for careful review of the role of parent groups in early intervention. Study findings also suggested that mothers and fathers have different needs as parents; relationship and parent/child interaction issues seemed important areas for attention by early intervention programs.

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Call for abstracts:

NAACOG, the Organization for Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nurses, seeks abstracts describing clinical research and innovative programs in patient care, education, research dissemination, staff development, and resource organization for consideration for paper or poster presentations at its ninth national meeting, to be held May 31-June 4, 1992, in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Abstracts must be postmarked by November 4, 1991. For guidelines, contact Jeffrey Bulluck, Department of Education and Research, NAACOG, 409 12th Street, S.W., Washington, D.S. 20014-2191, tel: (202) 863-2447. Specify an interest in clinical research or innovative program guidelines.

Beginnings Early Intervention Services of Cambria County, Inc., in conjunction with the **Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics,** will sponsor a conference entitled "Educating Physicians and Other Health Professionals to Care for Children with Chronic and Disabling Conditions: Preservice and Continuing Education Approaches." The conference will be held May 21-22, 1992 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Presentations of training models or materials are sought.

Abstracts of 1-3 pages should be sent no later than December 15, 1991 to Dr. Rosalyn B. Darling, Beginngs, 406 Main Street, Suite 201, Johnstown, PA 15901.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Nursing and the **University of Wisconsin Children's Hospital Division of Pediatric Nursing** seek papers, poster displays and education or research workshops for presentation at the Second Biennial Pediatric Nursing Conference, entitled "Celebrate Diversity: Education, Research and Practice across Cultures." The conference will be held September 9-11, 1992, in Madison, Wisconsin.

Abstracts should be postmarked no later than January 15, 1992. For guidelines and information, write to National 1992 Pediatric Nursing Conference, Zeena Kies Engelke, UW-Madison School of Nursing, K6/274 Clinical Science Center, 600 Highland Avenue, Madison, WI 53792-0001.

Office for Substance Abuse Prevention (OSAP) demonstration grants for the development of model projects for pregnant and postpartum women and their infants

A new OSAP Program Announcement (No. PA-91-32) solicits applications for service demonstration projects that propose promising models or innovative approaches to addressing the needs of substance-using pregnant and postpartum women and their infants. Among many areas that have been identified as requiring continuing attention, model development, and replication are strategies for promoting client retention in prenatal care, the impact of different models of out-patient versus residential treatment services, outreach, the importance of early bonding between mother and infant, the role of the father and extended family in subsequent prevention of maternal alcohol and other drug use, the factors contributing to recidivism, the co-existence of mental illness and alcohol or other drug-use, the impact of the exposure to alcohol and other drugs on siblings through family disruption and other disruptions, and the longer term developmental consequences for children.

Applications received by January 20, 1992 will be reviewed in May/June with December, 1992 as the earliest start date. The ongoing receipt and review schedule also includes receipt dates of May 20 and September 20.

Questions concerning program issues or grants management issues may be directed to:

Division of Demonstrations and Evaluation
Office for Substance Abuse Prevention
Parklawn Building/Rockwall II, Room 9B03
5600 Fishers Lane Rockville, MD 20857
(301) 443-4564

Maternal and Child Health Bureau
Health Resources and Services Administration
Parklawn Building, Room 9-31
5600 Fishers Lane Rockville, MD 20857
(301) 443-5720

Conference Call:

November, 1991

November 7-10: *The National Perinatal Association* will hold its annual clinical conference and exposition in Boston, Massachusetts, with the theme, "Interdependence: The Perinatal Health Care Trend of the 90's." Plenary speakers will include Lynn Paltrow, Norman Fost, Kay Clark, Jane Barnsteiner, Susan Rumsey Givens, Deborah Klein Walker, Lynn Cooper, David Nagey, Kenneth Edelin, George Little, Elizabeth Noyes, Judith Lasker, Alan Fleischman, and Sally Mack. For information contact Julie Leachman, NPA Executive Director, University Professional Center, Suite 525, 3500 East Fletcher Avenue, Tampa, FL 33613, tel: (813) 971-1008.

November 13-14: *Variety Pre-Schooler's Workshop* will hold a conference in Syosset, NY entitled "Strengthening the Family: The Child's Primary Resource." Speakers will include T. Berry Brazelton, Judith S. Bloch, and Barry S. Zuckerman. Contact Judith Margolis, Variety Pre-Schooler's Workshop, 47 Humphrey Drive, Syosset, NY 11791, tel: 1-800-933-VPSW, fax: (516) 921-8130.

November 13-17: *The Council for Exceptional Children's Division for Early Childhood* will sponsor an International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs in St. Louis, Missouri. Lisbeth J. Vincent and

Barbara T. Bowman will address general sessions. For information, write Seventh Annual DEC International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs, 3 Church Circle, Suite 194, Annapolis, MD 21401.

November 15: *Education Resources, Inc.* will sponsor an Early Intervention Conference in Danvers, Massachusetts featuring Heidelise Als. Contact Education Resources, Inc., 16 Park Street, Suite 2, Medfield, MA 02052, tel: (508) 359-6533.

November 15-20: The *National Council on Family Relations* will hold its 53rd Annual Conference in Denver, Colorado. Entitled "Families and Poverty," the conference will feature presentations by Michael Katz, Frances Fox Piven, William Julius Wilson, Helena Lopata, and Lynda Henley Walters. Write or call National Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave. NE, Suite 550, Minneapolis, MN 55421, tel: (612) 781-9331, fax: (612) 781-9348.

December, 1991

December 14-17: The *National Association for Perinatal Addiction Research and Education* (NAPARE) will hold a National Training Forum in Chicago, Illinois, etitled "Making a Difference: People and Programs Treating Mother, Child and Family." For information, contact Judith C. Burnison, Executive Director, NAPARE, 11 E. Hubbard Street, Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60611, tel: (312) 329-2512, Fax: (312) 329-9131.

January, 1992

January 10-11: *Continuing Education in the Health Sciences* will sponsor the Second National Perinatal Drug Dependency Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. Write or call Perinatal Drug Dependency Conference, Continuing Education in the Health Sciences, Room 105 - 2194 Health Sciences Mall, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6T 1Z3, tel: (604) 822-2626, Fax: (604) 822-4835.

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